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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONAL LITERATURE IN GHANA

BY

CHRISTIAN KWAME AWUYAH

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

DEPARTMENT OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH for acceptance, a thesis entitled THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONAL LITERATURE IN GHANA submitted by CHRISTIAN KWAME AWUYAH in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in COMPARATIVE LITERATURE.

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GEORGE LANG

Milan V. Dimic

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MILAN DIMIC

E.A. McDougall

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E.A. McDOUGALL

E.D. Blodgett

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for RICHARD PRIEBE

MAY 30, 1991

Dedication

To my parents, Mr. Ben Ayi Awuyah and Madam Rosina Abla Forfoe, who, though not having had formal schooling themselves, have dedicated themselves and their resources to the education of their children.

Abstract

The Development of a National Literature in Ghana

With few exceptions, critical studies of Ghanaian literature have failed to represent its diverse artistic modes and cultural plurality. Most of the interested scholars and critics have concentrated on Ghanaian writing in English, especially the works of a few well-established authors like Ayi Kwei Armah, Kofi Awoonor and Efua Sutherland. Alhough these scholarly efforts have helped to draw attention to a major component of Ghanaian literature, they are nevertheless narrow in scope. They hinder the appreciation of Ghanaian literature(s) as a poly-ethnic and multi-lingual literary system which ought not to be defined in terms of linguistic and cultural homogeneity.

Going beyond such a limited view, this study offers a perspective which reflects the diverse languages, artistic modes and forms within the literary system of Ghana. An historical study of Ghanaian literature from a national perspective brings into focus the different literatures of this nation --- literatures in Ghanaian languages and in English. Such an approach facilitates the analysis of the relations of varieties of texts within one literary system. It insists upon the examination of the intellectual and historical background as well as the institutional organisation of Ghanaian literature.

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The final version of this dissertation was written at West Chester University, my academic "home" at the moment. I wish to thank Dr. Richard Wells, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, Dr. Claude Hunsberger, Chair Department of English, Dr. Kostas Myrsiades, Dr. Jim Trotman, Dr. Obinkaram Echewa and Dr. Geetha Ramanathan for their support and understanding.

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In closing, I wish to make reference to a traditional Ghanaian folktale in which a young man borrows several features from his friends to enhance his looks in order to appeal to an attractive maiden. My teachers, friends and family have been most generous with me; they always have had tools ready when I need them most and they have encouraged me to use these tools as best as I can.

The Development of A National Literature in Ghana

Abstract

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Introduction

Scholarship on Ghanaian literature is considerable, but much of it is centred on major writers such as Ayi Kwei Armah, Kofi Awoonor, Efua Sutherland, Ama Ata Aidoo and Atu Kwei Okai. Undoubtedly, these authors deserve national and international acclaim. Studies of their work have led to an increase in knowledge about Ghanaian and, indeed, African writing. However, by concentrating on these major writers, most of the scholars and critics fail to acknowledge the diversity and significance of the other components of Ghanaian literature: oral literature, literature in local languages, children's literature and popular literature. Increasingly, the best known Ghanaian writers are appreciated in terms of general African literary achievement, but hardly in relation to other aspects of the literary institution of Ghana.

The study of Ghanaian literature on the basis of major literary works alone ignores intricate aspects of the full creative web, a problem that can be highlighted by an analogy. Previously, some critics (i.e. Judith Gleason, 1967 and Oladele Taiwoo, 1967) saw Ghanaian literature as a monolithic virgin forest. Then, others like Derek Wright and Robert Fraser demonstrated that indeed there are large trees in this forest. But their emphases have been on the irokos and baobabs. In my study I will focus on the many different types of trees which make up the forest of Ghanaian literature.

When a forest is viewed from afar it is only the tallest and largest trees (iroko, baobab, odum, mahogany, sapele and silk cotton) which are conspicuous and easily perceived by all. But the forest also contains creeping plants and rich undergrowth which are no less important than the big trees. The ecosystem draws sustenance from the soil and climate. There is mutual dependence in this environment which also supports animal and human life. Just as it is misleading to describe the forest of Ghana as being populated solely by its most distinct inhabitants, the tallest trees, it is inappropriate to study Ghanaian literature in relation to the literary achievements of its major authors alone. Beside these literary giants, there are other significant writers who must be considered.

By focusing on the entire national literature I hope to show the diverse artistic modes and forms of Ghanaian writing. This approach enhances an appreciation of the different cultural and historical backgrounds of Ghanaian literatures. The concept of national literature allows for, among other things, the study of the role of literary institutions and extra-literary factors in the development and growth of literature.

In Chapter One of this dissertation, "The Concept of National Literature," I advocate the study of national literature as opposed to scholarship in African literature which is general and which is concentrated on major writers (Armah, Awoonor, Achebe, Soyinka, and others). Much of the criticism of African literature has consisted of survey-type studies based on linguistic, regional and political paradigms. Broad categorizations have been accomplished through the analysis of a limited canon of texts. This tendency to generalise, which has allowed for easy and neat packaging, has distorted the contents. The result is that African literature seems to be an overworked field of study.

In recommending the national literature concept in the study of African literatures, I note the useful historical precedent of the evolution of national literatures in Europe from the Latin dominated literary system of the Middle Ages. Whereas Latin literature initially occupied the centre of the literary system of Medieval Europe, in time it was literatures in vernacular languages which ultimately became the European national literatures. Similarly, today African writing in European languages is often considered the major component of African literature to the detriment of literatures in indigenous languages.

There are practical and conceptual difficulties in the application of the concept of national literature in Africa. Some of the problems immediately encountered are the multiple language and ethnic distributions within any one political entity. Given that most of the political units across Africa are artificial constructs created to meet colonial aspirations rather than to reflect the actual linguistic patterns on the continent, there is justifiable scepticism about applying the concept of national literature. In most instances movements toward liberation from colonial rule were not accompanied by a strong sense of identification with a single national language. Since their independence African countries have continued to use European languages as linguae francae and for official purposes. With few exceptions, such as Tanzania and Somalia this seems to be the general linguistic situation in Post-Independence Africa. Accordingly, some critics argue that the national literature concept cannot be applied with validity when there is no linguistic unity or when the literature is expressed mostly in a non-native language.

I address this issue by using Ghana as a case study to show that the study of an African national literature must include literary works from diverse languages and ethnicities. Albert Gérard supports this position in his own study of Ghanaian literature.

> In Ghana as in the majority of African countries, no acceptable account can be offered of the nation's literature unless it deals both with African-language and European language writing. This implies that the study of any "national literature" in Africa is bound to be effected on a translinguistic basis, that is, with the methods and techniques evolved by comparative literature.[1]

Such an analysis involves a description and explanation of how literatures in the various Ghanaian languages and English interact. The theoretical framework which best allows for the processing and organizing of data obtained from a variety of texts in different languages has been designed by Itamar Even-Zohar and other leading systems analysts such as Gideon Toury and Jose Lambert. These literary theorists contend that any literary system is a polysystem comprising many sub-systems that interrelate ("interfere") with each other. Their methodology enables one to see the true richness of Ghanaian literature.

Chapter Two, "Major Considerations for the Literary History of Ghana," is a discussion of some of the conceptual and practical issues involved in the reconstruction of the literary history of Ghana. Here I examine questions about the birth-place, residence and nationality of Ghanaian writers, and discuss how the issue of language for Ghanaian writing has a major impact on the national literature concept. But a far more basic difficulty than these issues is the lack of data. The unavailability of data makes the work of the literary historian extremely painstaking; he must be wary about making precise statements since they might not be conclusive. Often new findings may require revision of literary history in large terms, not just in details.

In Chapter Three which is titled "A Provisional Literary History of Ghana," I review discussions on oral literature showing its primacy in the Ghanaian literary system. I also undertake a language by language survey of the emergence of Ghanaian written literatures in Hausa, ajami (the use of the Arabic alphabet for non-Arabic languages), English, Akan, Nzema, Ga and Adangbe, and Ewe. In this historical account of Ghanaian literature to date, I take into consideration factors such as year, place of publication, distribution, periodization and subjects. My survey is provisional because it takes me as far as literary research can to advance my present notion of the literary history of Ghana.

In Chapters Four, Five and Six, I concentrate on institutions and literary factors which have helped in the development and growth of Ghanaian literature, and which invariably affect the definition of Ghanaian literature. Chapter Four deals with the intellectual and historical background of Ghanaian writing, which is marked by a strong protest tradition.

Chapter Five, "The Development of Writing and Publishing," focuses on the introduction of the Arabic and Roman alphabets by the Moslems and Christians respectively. The former have made a relatively limited impact on the development of written literature. The introduction of the Roman alphabet, however, has provided a strong impetus for the growth of literature in Ghana. The early Christian missionaries zealously taught their Ghanaian converts literacy and supervised their reading of scriptural texts and the writing of morally edifying books. These early church activities had a strong influence on the development and direction of Ghanaian literature.

The Christian missions made major contributions to the development of literature through the establishment of book depots and publishing houses in Ghana. As well, the beginning of publishing in Ghana was due to the efforts of the early Ghanaian nationalists, intellectuals and newspapermen. Since then, various individuals and private entrepreneurs have made significant contributions to the production of Ghanaian literature. However, much of the growth and expansion of modern Ghanaian literature can be attributed to the educational and publishing programs established by Kwame Nkrumah. Chapter Six examines the roles of print and non-print media, and of promotional associations in the development of Ghanaian literature.

Chapter Seven, "Types and Samples of Ghanaian Literature," is a study of various texts and artistic expressions which make manifest the gamut of modes and forms of Ghanaian writing.

The Conclusion of this dissertation contains my final comments about the use of the polysystem theory and the obstacles which must be overcome to see its realisation.

Note

1 Albert Gérard, "Toward a National History of Ghanaian Literature: A Case in Methodology," The History and Historiography of Commonwealth Literature, ed. Dieter Riemenschneider (Tübingen: Muller and Bass, 1983), 97.

Chapter One

The Concept of National Literature

The evolution of African literature and the emerging scholarly trends which organize it for discussion have yet to establish a clearly acceptable image of the literary history of Africa. Most of the interested scholars and critics have until recently undertaken survey-type studies based on the tripartite issues of language for African writing, colonial experience and regionalism. While they have promoted uniform views of African culture, critics and scholars have rarely examined the literary systems of individual countries or the relationships between the literary systems of various countries. Scholars have shown little appreciation for the diversity of artistic expression across Africa. Because of their primary concern for forging generalizations about African literature, literary critics have quite often been inattentive to details about local literary phenomena.

In his comments about this development, Gérard contends that there is so much generalisation in African literary criticism because scholars tend to lump together African texts or authors who write in a common Western language.

> The growth of literary African scholarship was thus characterised by the publication of works surveying a whole language area, a region, within a definite language area, in a few cases, a single country.[1]

A short survey of developments in this field of scholarship shows how repetitive and uninspiring the situation can be. Léopold Sédar Senghor's Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache de langue française, published in 1948, is probably the first of many significant works to arrange African writing according to linguistic critria. Since then many scholars have produced books and anthologies of African writing which are international in scope and which adopt language as the common framework. Lilyan Kesteloot's Les écrivains noirs de langue française: naissance d'une littérature (Université libre de Bruxelles, 1960, later published in 1963) and Robert Pageard's Littérature négro-africaine (1967) are some of the general studies of African and African diasporan literature based on the common Franco-linguistic affinity.

The factor of common language was also used to demarcate literature produced by Africans from countries once colonized by Britain and Portugal. Gerald Moser's study of Luso-African writing is a notable example. In 1962, there was a colloquium on African Literature at Makerere University in Kampala held under the banner "A conference of African Writers of English Expression". Since then the inclination toward survey-type studies on African Literature along linguistic lines has increased and generated the traditions of "Anglophone," "Francophone" and "Lusophone" African writing. A study of African literature on the basis of existing European language zones is a satisfactory, though not entirely acceptable, perspective.

The same claim cannot be made, however, about the fact that some other critics have not recognised the literary worthiness or legitimacy of African writing in European languages. Often the critical reception of African literature by these scholars has been characterised by colonial or paternal attitudes. They have tended to interpret African writing in relation to western literary traditions and have consequently judged it by inappropriate norms. Elizabeth Pryse in a 1972 essay stated:

> We are in for a spate of "quaint" books from Africa, written in what almost amounts to pidgin English - this is the new writing of Africa and the only true way in which the African can speak his mind and convey his emotion and environment in the English language.[2]

Fortunately Pryse is no Cassandra. Few informed readers would deny that African writers have made some of the finest contributions to literature in recent times. The Prysean kind of criticism could easily have been dismissed as outdated and inconsequential except that it comes in the wake of the general practise of characterizing African writing according to European language units.

Other critics have expressed a similar linguistic and cultural chauvinism. In 1971, Adrian Roscoe wrote:

> If an African writes in English his work must be considered as belonging to English as a

> whole, and it must be judged by the same critical standards as any other works written.[3]

He has expressed, perhaps only in a more sophisticated way, the same views as Pyrse, maintaining that literary works written by Africans in western languages must be considered as constituents of the western literary traditions.

A typical argument of western scholars regarding the state of literary works by Africans and Asians in western languages is expressed by Connor Cruise O'Brian :

> The novels by Achebe, Narayan and Naipaul are not contributions to "new literatures"; they are contributions to English literature, the literature of the English language. They further enrich that fabulously wealthy heiress with new accents, new insights, new metaphors, new concepts, just as Irish, Welsh, Americans, Australians and other vaguely colonial peoples have already enriched her .... The notion that nationality can and should be a separate and distinct literature within the English language was, I think, mainly a propaganda product of the "Irish Literary Renaissance" of the 1890's. It was a pleasing fancy then, but enough is enough.[4]

Clearly O'Brian's contention conceals a thinly disguised Eurocentricism.

By limiting the determinant of the status of literary works to language alone, critics invalidate the specific self-hood of the people whose authors are being read. It is as if the characters and experience being portrayed are incidental to the writing. For such scholars, what is important is that an excellent literary work in English, French or Portuguese has been written; the author happens to be an African. As Mineke Schipper points out,

> In African Literature Eurocentricism has meant that "the best" (according to Western norms, that is) Francophone, [Lusophone] and Anglophone texts have often been incorporated in French, [Portuguese] and English literature.[5]

For instance, in 1980, H. Blamires, editor of A Guide to Twentieth Century Literature, described this collection as "a survey which attempts to sum up the individual achievements that make up 20th-Century English Literature".[6] The survey includes works by writers from Ghana, Nigeria, India, Pakistan, Canada and England. Curiously, however, it excludes the literary works of Americans. It would seem that language has become a common base for the integration of miscellaneous literary phenomena. One suspects that the common use of English language notwithstanding, Blamires accepts American literature as being different from English literature. If that is the implied position, then one wonders why the same cannot be said of Indian or African literature.

Partly in response to the cultural bigotry of some western scholars and partly because of their own search for effective media to express local experience, African writers and scholars have made significant statements about the language issue. Some of the major positions on this subject are held by Obijunwa Wali and Chinua Achebe. Wali has virulently expressed the futility of using western languages for African writing.

> The uncritical acceptance of English or French as the medium of educated African writing is misdirected and has no chance of advancing literature and culture. For African literature to be truly African, it must be written in African language ... there is no originality in English Literature.[7]

In this statement (1963) Wali dismissed the practice of writing in European languages as un-African and moribund.

In contrast, Achebe accepts and justifies African creative writing in western languages. At the same time, however, he condemns scholars who draw thin or no lines between African writing in European languages and western literatures. Achebe claims that he strives to "[fashion] out an English which is at once universal and able to carry out [his] peculiar experience".[8] The Nigerian writer is convinced

> The English language will be able to carry the weight of [his] African experiences. But it will be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home, but altered to suit its new African surroundings.[9]

Besides language, the issues of the relationships of politics and literature, and regionalism have become key concerns and have influenced the direction of scholarship on African writing. Written African literature is a direct outgrowth of and hence a reaction against colonial rule. The literary works have generally been read as artistic responses to, among other things, the colonial phenomenon and the current upheavals in the continent. Literary scholars have filtered African imaginative writing for political and ideological content, and they have recognized the colonial experience as a major leitmotif of African writing.

The concepts of négritude and Pan-Africanism which were propagated in furtherance of the struggle against foreign domination served to promote shared African values and group identity. These issues were increasingly adopted as the referential contents of African literature. The common thematic thrust of African works was regarded as continental in relevance. The literature was appreciated for its anti-colonial advocacy, a posture that was repeated many times. Critics and scholars stressed these general features finding the broad categorization appropriate, convenient and rewarding. There have been essays, articles, book-length studies and colloquia on the themes of colonialism, commitment, conflict, militancy, and protest in African literature. Most of these studies such as Donald Munro's Protest and Conflict in African Literature and Chinweizu's (et al.) Toward the Decolonization of African Literature have been general and have encompassed the entire continent.

Assumptions of common bonds due to colonial history and black identity lie behind many of the survey-type studies that brought together the literatures of Africa and the African diaspora or miscellaneous post-colonial literatures. Cook and Henderson's _The Militant Black Writer in Africa and America_ (which attempts to connect African and Black American aesthetics) and O. R. Dathorne's _The Blackman's Mind: A History of African Literature_ (a literary history of African and African diaspora literature) are examples of works which are centred on the common ingredients of black identity and African and African diaspora experience.

Survey-type studies have also increasingly been based on geographical divisions. Many scholars of African literature are convinced that this literature can be demarcated regionally, as there is indeed certain socio-cultural and political evidence to support a regional approach. A common approach of the regional survey-type studies is to represent works from within one geographical region (Oladele Taiwo's _Introduction to West African Literature_, 1967). Other regional surveys deal with works written in English (Adrian Roscoe's _Mother is Gold: A Study in West African Literature_, 1971). Then there is the collection consisting of studies of particular genres from one region (Judith Gleason's _This Africa: Novels by West Africans in English and French_, 1965).

These general studies which have proliferated around language, politics and geography have perpetuated wrong assumptions about near-total uniformity of the continent. In many instances, scholars such as Blair, Munro, and Nwoga have not gone beyond recognizing similarities in language, colonial experience or region. They overlook the relative abilities of the different cultures to survive the colonial phenomenon and fail to note the different cultural, historical and social backgrounds of each nation's literatures. The inclination toward general survey simultaneously undermined the impetus toward the study of the particular phenomenon or the specific case. From a comparative perspective, I question for example whether one studies the literatures of Europe or the Balkans as one unit simply because of their geographical proximity or cultural affinity.

Emmanuel Obiechina contends that literary scholarship on African literature is also limited in scope in another manner. As he points out, scholars have concentrated on Modern African literature, which is a short-sighted perspective. He complains about the lack of recognition of writing in Arabic alphabets as one of the earliest forms of literature in Africa. He notes that the history of this type of literature in Africa dates back beyond eight or nine centuries; this necessitates a literary history that is much longer than that of African literature in western languages. Lalag Bown also insists that "our perception of African literature ought to be a rather longer one than has been assumed by many critics".[10]

Oral literature and literature in African languages have received scant attention as well. Kofi Anyidoho expresses his concern about this anomaly in literary scholarship on African literature:

> Somehow, studies in African literature have generally pretended that Africa's main claim to a tradition of literature is so far what has so far been produced by African writers mostly in languages better understood by non-Africans and in a medium not accessible to most Africans. But our writers are the minority representatives of Africa's poetic potential.[11]

Ruth Finnegan and Kwabena Nketia also see oral literature as a major artistic form which is unfortunately ignored or not appreciated by many scholars. This has serious implications for a continent where the oral form of communication is still dominant. In Africa oral literature is manifested in diverse artistic forms (music, songs, dances, proverbs, story-telling, etc.) and expressed in numerous languages.

It has been established that the inclinations toward general studies based on the three-fold issues of language, the relationships of art and politics, and regionalism have created uniform perspectives on African literature. Such general categories have been ineffective for the representations of particular literary phenomena. Clearly, the specific meanings of various types of literature in Africa cannot be correctly derived unless the texts are evaluated by appropriate norms and precepts. The survey-type approach is inadequate because it does not encompass certain important segments (literature in local languages, orature, popular literature, etc.). Moreover it cannot be used effectively to explain the relationships within the various literary systems of Africa.

It is necessary to formulate principles which can improve the perception of African literature. There is a need for conceptual and theoretical frameworks capable of elucidating the multiple forms of literature and their interrelationships. Therefore, I advocate the study of national literature, an approach which complements the usual preoccupation with subjects like "West African literature", "Francophone African writing" and "Southern African literature". The narrowing of focus to a particular African country entails the proportionate sharpening of perspective. There is a decrease in the proclivity to engage in vague and sweeping generalities and an increase in the tendency to undertake a close study of particular phenomena.

The concept of national literature has some natural strengths: it requires the study of a variety of texts in the different languages and an appreciation of the different modes and forms of literature of a national political unit. In addition this concept has heuristic usefulness: it facilitates the study of the role of institutions and other extra-literary factors in the production and diffusion of literature.

The study of literature from a national perspective is an endorsement of the present political units of Africa. It is evident that the sense of national identity has grown as African countries attained their independence. In "The Study of African Literature: Birth and Growth of a New Branch of Learning," Gérard envisages that the inclination toward the study of national literature would develop even more.

> As the blurring effect of negritude and vestiges of Pan-Africanism began to dissipate in the late 60's, a hitherto neglected factor began to impinge upon the consciousness of intellectuals in general and literary scholars in particular: the realization that Africa was not one huge blob of undifferentiated blackness, but that each writer, each country, each linguistic nexus of countries had its own specifity.[12]

It is neccessary to address the cultural implication of the political changes in Africa.

Also, some useful lessons should emerge through comparative analyses of the history of national literatures in Africa and Europe as there are indeed major parallels. The present state of African literature is strikingly similar to Medieval European literature. Many of the problems of national literature in Africa today were experienced in the evolution of the national literatures of Europe. The linguistic debates and the determination of relationships between national and continental literatures, which are some of the major issues in literary scholarship on African literature, have been examined by some scholars of western European national literatures. The problem of language in some European countries (multilingual countries like Belgium and Switzerland) is somewhat similar to that of Africa. The exploration of the analogy between Africa and

Europe is also justified in view of the deep cultural and historical contacts between Africans and Europeans. Some of the difficulties regarding the formation of national literatures in Africa stem from the European colonial presence: the use of European languages for African writing, colonial boundaries which divide homogenous cultural groups, etc. One cannot overemphasise the fact that, of course, each situation has some unique features.

It is perhaps appropriate to begin by discussing the role of the church and Latin, the principal language of the time, since they were primarily responsible for the development of the sense of universalism in medieval European Catholic culture. The cultural and religious organizations of that era served to enhance solidarity among Europeans. The church became a unifying force, incorporating within it some Latin traditions. Christian values dominated scholarship and a number of universities were established under the auspices of the church. According to François Jost, "since antiquity, the ideal education has been a studium generale; the appropriate school founded in the Middle Ages was called Universitas".[13] Another Comparatist, Peter Nagy, makes the following observation:

> Literary consciousness was fused mainly on Latin literature. Latin literature however, was not of national character, but it supported and expressed the cultural unity beyond the confines of countries and language; both its consciousness and its studying was free from constraints, it was universal within genres.[14]

The dominant role of Latin in the Middle Ages is to some extent similar to the significance of western languages in Africa today. Whether Africans would repudiate or even minimize the importance of European languages just as Europeans did with Latin is something which can only be answered by future literary historians.

The transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance era was foreshadowed by an increase in prosperity. The feudal and manorial systems of the Medieval era had been undermined by the growth of the middle class and the rise of towns. There was prosperity and that in turn stimulated the desire for learning. The influence of the church was reduced as a result and the expansion of secular values was marked by an increase in the tendency to emphasise individual accomplishments and the humanist advocacy of the ideal, the Renaissance man of universal genius. Education was supposed to lead to the mastering of the values of different cultures and so, consequently, the several academies that flourished during this period taught students to appreciate diverse artistic forms. The desire for new learning was facilitated by the invention of the printing press, later, the telescope and other marvels, giving further impetus to scientific studies.

The flourishing of Renaissance culture and its literary manifestations were far-reaching. Latin was no longer the sole language of scholarship as European intellectuals wrote in their native languages. For instance, Petrarch and

Boccacio wrote in Latin and their vernacular Italian. Dante's masterpiece, The Divine Comedy, was written in the Tuscan dialect. The works of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Rabelais and Cervantes, were also written in local languages. The rich literature of the Elizabethan age of England, the sensual vitality of Renaissance France, the classical and humanist scholarship of the Northern European countries and the products of the Golden Age of Spanish literature were mostly written in native European languages.

From the Renaissance era (as in Africa today) love for indigenous language and literature increased passion for nation. All over the Germanic territories, Spain, England and France and elsewhere in Europe arose advocacy to use local languages, to produce texts in languages understood by the indigenous people and to celebrate the achievements of the societies; this tendency was strengthened by Protestantism (for example, Luther's translation of the Bible into German). A strong sense of national consciousness developed in Europe as various Europeans sought to establish their identities and to consolidate their political boundaries.

The achievements of European writers in their own languages are generally known. African writers, like authors from other traditions, are aware of the pride that comes with artistic achievement in their native languages. The spirit of dignity and defiance that characterised Dante's decision to write his ultimate poem in his own language has been replicated in Ngugi's determination to write in Gikuyu. The decision to write in African languages, Ngugi and his colleagues maintain, is literary and political; it is a rejection of neo-colonialism. Motivated by nationalism, they have been striving for their economic and cultural independence.

What is "nationalism" and what are the implications of the terminologies "national character," "national identity," "national culture" and "national literature"? Although it is generally expressed through strong identification with a national territory, nationalism has different meanings for different peoples. Etymologically, the terms "nationalism" and "national" have one root origin, "nation," which the Oxford English Dictionary indicates is a derivative from the Latin word, "nasci," meaning to be born. The Latin word was used to designate people from a particular region. In medieval universities students were identified according to their birth place. However, there are new connotations of "nasci" which reflect the impact of changes in social, cultural, economic and political spheres.

There are conceptual difficulties with terms such as "national Identity," "national character," "national spirit," etc. The problem is deepened by the unsettling existential questions about these words. What constitutes national spirit or national identity? How is national character or consciousness manifested? And it is equally nebulous when it comes to distinguishing the so-called national features of a literature.

Many of the scholars who have attempted to bring clarification to these terminological difficulties have ended up muddling the issues further. Rene Wellek, in his characteristic bluntness, points out the futility of such scholarship.

> There are still modern literary critics enlisting this elusive concept of national character, despite the obvious arbitrariness of the criteria and unpalatable consequence of having to grade authors according to their "national merits".[15]

Wellek refers to critics such as Roy Pascal, a contemporary British critic, who maintains in The German Novel that the German novel deals with the problems of inner education in response to social reality. Pascal argues that the Bildungsroman is typically German and best suitable for the exploration of the uncertainties in the growth of the German hero. This critic follows a long tradition of European scholars (for example, Hippolite Taine who identifies the triad of la race, le milieu and le moment as cognates of national chararcter) who contend that national features are imprinted on national literatures.

Generally, questions concerning nation and national characteristics have also been asked in relation to the emerging nations of Africa, Asia and Latin America as well as other countries that are not homogeneous. Nigeria provides a case in point. It is possible to define the ethos of Nigerian society as reflected in its literature, says the Nigerian critic, A. N. Egbuegu:

> The National characteristics that are beginning to emerge in Nigerian literature in English reflect the pulse of the Nigerian nation: its aggressive and dehumanizing capitalism, the restless vitality of its urban dwellings, the peculiar vigorous homour of its citizens even in the midst of an economically debilitating existence, the increasing awareness of the economically under-privileged Nigerians and of the class differences often generated by the kind of acute capitalism which the Nigerian nation embodies.[16]

Clive Wake agrees that:

> It may be possible to begin talking about a Nigerian Literature and to see something like the emergence of a distinctive type with an aura of its own. Already the general reader is becoming aware of certain typically Nigerian features, mainly a kind of vitality and ebullience which is very Nigerian and which one senses in the people themselves on arriving in Lagos from Dakar or Accra.[17]

The basic question here is how does one measure aggression or vitality? What do these value laden terms mean? Could the qualities associated with Nigerians and their writing be extended to other cultures, peoples or countries? Do all Nigerian writers reflect these features?

Some scholars define national literature using the language criterion: national literature is expressed in the national language of a country. For instance, François Jost is unequivocal in his view that the existence of national language is a sine qua non for the formation of national literature: "l'unité de langue est une condition necéssaire ... pour une littérature nationale".[18]

The German linguist, Willa Muir argues that language self-generates values and therefore the values of the citizens of a particular nation would be enshrined in its national language. According to Muir, language

> conditions the kind of thought it expresses and so must have organic relationships to the aspirations and imaginative constructions of those who use it.[19]

The use of the national language for national literature is also stressed by many African writers and critics. Wali and Ngugi have eloquently written in defense of this practice. Emeke-Okeke Ezeigbo also strongly advocates national language for national literature:

> ... a national literature is a body of literature produced by the people in a given nation in the native language of that nation. The distinctive stamp of that nation must be on the literature in order to make it native to the nation. The distinctive stamp is language. Thus if the national of one country writes in the language of another country, his work is claimed by that other country in whose language the work is produced. The fundamental issue here is language. Any effort to ignore the matter of language in the definition of a national literature is to be hollow, if not dishonest.[20]

There are fundamental problems with formulating the definition of national literature solely in relation to national language. It is a fact that political and linguistic boundaries have rarely fused. For example, English, French, Spanish, Portuguese and German are supranational languages which are used, in each case, in more than one national geographical entity. It would be spurious to claim as English, French or Spanish all the literary expressions in those languages. Conversely, several languages exist simultaneously within one national political border. Many nations are bilingual or even multi-lingual. For example, Belgium is bilingual; the U.S.S.R., Canada, Switzerland, India and all African countries are multilingual.

Thus, the designation of national literature according to linguistic identity needs to be modified. More often than not, the national linguistic designation does not refer to the political unit. In such instances, the name of the country is used to designate the literature. Thus there is Canadian and American literature rather than English lierature. Also, it is possible to talk about Indian or Ghanaian literature.

Do the lack of homogeneity and the conceptual difficulties weaken the argument for national literature? Perhaps a viable solution to these puzzles could be provided by a modification of Goethe's vision. This German writer advocated cultural universalism and less inclination toward national literature. He saw the possibility of all the literatures of the world or rather the literatures of Europe and perhaps the Far East merging to form one great synthesis of Weltliteratur, in which case, the greatest literary works would be connected to a world literary network. This world literature, he explained, would be sustained and rejuvenated through exchanges, travel and interactions between the various scholars of the world.

Because of new technology as well as several of the factors cited by Goethe (travel, literary exchange, etc.) the world is much smaller than ever before. But, paradoxically, nations are also conscious about their territorial integrity. History has shown that in spite of their common links the various European countries have achieved national formations. Artists from these countries naturally see themselves in terms of national cultures. Would the new states in Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America and Asia follow the same routes?

There are some lingering doubts about the possibility of the general concept of national literature and its applicability in emerging countries. Among contemporary scholars who have renounced the study of national literature is Volker Strung. In his contribution to the historiography of Commonwealth literature, Strung declares that scholarship in national literature is unrewarding.

> The nation as focal point in literature has long outlived whatever usefulness it once may have possessed because it subscribes to a spurious notion of distinctiveness which seldom if ever sees the light of the testing phase of inquiry. Thus the whole question of the distinctiveness of national literature

> immunizes and thereby disqualifies itself by refusing to take up the challenge of contradictory evidence or competing hypotheses.[21]

It is possible that Strung is objecting to the traditional concept of national literature as a distinct national entity. If so, then his contention would be validated by empirical evidence relating to the actual heterogeneous linguistic and ethnic composition of most nations. It appears Strung is addressing the wrong issues, since the call for national literature in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America is not to be misconstrued as advocacy for national distinctiveness. Rather it is a call to take into account all the literatures produced within a particular country.

The debate on national literature is also taking place within African literary scholarship. Some African critics tend to reject the concept of national literature because they consider it regressive and fear it could lead to balkanization. Olympe Bhêly-Quénum, for example, sees national literature as a divisive concept:

> Littératures nationales, est-ce un concept diviseur? Ma réponse est affirmative sans la moindre hésitation: enfermer chaqueècrivain dans son pays (pourquoi pas dans sa ville ou son village natal?) c'est procéder à une nouvelle balkanization culturelle de l'Afrique noire. Le fait que nombre d'entre nous procèdent en partant de leur milieu national ne signifie pas qu'ils aient choisi d'explorer de seules réalités du terroir.... Un romancier ou un poète n'est pas un topographe de son pays. Quand bien même il le

> serait, l'essence du créateur en lui, chargée de caprices et d'imprévus, perturberait les données mensurables.[22]

Tchicaya U Tam'si resists any attempt to appropriate his writing in national terms and even adds that:

> Je suis écrivain: je ne suis pas ou d'une ethnie, ou d'une nation ou de l'Afrique: toutes ces composantes entrent dans ma personnalité et on ne peut limiter mon écriture à une ethnie dans la mesure où je suis personnellement en rupture avec l'ethnie et même en rupture avec l'Afrique.[23]

National literature would not necessarily lead to balkanization, especially if it develops on the basis of cultural plurality. The multi-linguistic and ethnic countries of Africa have good prospects for developing rich and diverse literary traditions. In contrast with the position of Bhêly-Quénum and Tam'si, there is at present some support in African literary scholarship for the study of national literature. Gérard, one of its key exponents, explains the reason for this new trend in African literature:

> Twenty years after independence, it had become crystal-clear that this blurred vision [of Africa as "one huge blob of undifferentiated blackness"] shared by colonialists and anti-colonialist alike could not be maintained and was bound to make room for a more nuanced perception of the rich diversity that characerizes African societies and their cultural production.[24]

Since the continental-wide movement for self-rule in Africa registered its first victory in Ghana in 1957, most of the newly independent African nations have embarked on consolidating their political gains and establishing various national institutions. Gérard makes the observation that the early leaders in the study of national literature in African literary scholarship (1960's) were mostly Eastern European and other foreign scholars. For instance A.A. Vavilov's essay, "Ghanaian Literature", was published in Breskina's Literatura stran Afriki, in 1964; the same year that V.V. Ivasheva wrote an article on Nigerian literature. Vivalov also wrote several essays on Nigerian literature which were published in collections of essays she edited in 1973 and 1975. The Canadian author, Margaret Laurence wrote Long Drums and Cannons: Nigerian Dramatists and Novelists, 1952-1966 which was published in London in 1968. The Czech author, Vladimir Klima wrote Modern Nigerian Poets (Prague 1969), while his compatriot, Jarmila Ortova wrote about Cameroun literature in 1972. Bruce King's Introduction to Nigerian Literature and Bernth Lindfors' Folklore in Nigerian Literature were published in 1971 and 1973, respectively. Lindfors made another contribution, Perspectives on Nigerian Literature in 1976.

The trend toward national literatures in African literary scholarship has gained much ground in the last fifteen years. In the foreward to the Fall 1987 issue of Research in African Literatures, a special issue on the concept of national literature in Africa, Virginia Coulon, Bernard Mouralis and Alain Ricard made a joint declaration that

> Up to the mid-1970's the standard critical work in the field of African literature was likely to be either a collection of case studies of selected writers from an assortment of African nations or a survey of writing covering wide geographical areas. More and more today, however, scholars concentrate on the literary production of a single African country, which is duly identified by the country label.[25]

Recent additions to scholarship on national literatures include: Stephen Arnold's study of Tanzanian literature, Gerald Moser's innovative research into the literatures of Mozambique and Angola, and Richard Bjornson's study of Cameroun literature.

Much of the scholarship in African national literature has been in English. However, in the last few years there have been significant contributions by Francophone scholars. Bordas and Karthala, both publishers of Francophone African literature, are committed to the promotion of scholarship of national literatures. Mukala Kadima-Nzuji's La littérature zaïroise de langue française published in Paris in 1984 was the first in Katharla's series.

Scholars are finally beginning to understand the implications of the study of national literature in Africa. They realise, as Gérard points out in own study of Ghanaian literature, that the national literatures of Africa must be defined as encompassing diverse cultural traditions. According to Gérard:

> The first step is obviously for historians to agree on a definition of "national literature" and it is difficult to see how a definition limited to the country's [Ghana's] writings in English, a foreign language which more than 75% of the population cannot understand at all. The national literature of Ghana must be held to comprise not only the various ethnic groups' oral art (still happily alive in many parts of Africa) but also all creative writings in the Ghanaian vernaculars, as well as the country's anglophone output.[26]

It is interesting to note that in his own essay, "Museum, Mausoleum, or Market: The Concept of National Literature," Ricard cites Gérard's argument on National literature. He also explains:

> Each state can have only one national literature, but has usually several national languages and one official language. Thus, the national literature is ideally the collection of literary texts written in the national and the official languages, by former and present residents of the geographical space now occupied by the country. It should also include the transcribed oral texts coming from ethnic groups living within the boundaries of the present state.[27]

Ricard clarifies further that national literature as a concept has pragmatic usefulness. "It is a conceptual tool, having a heuristic value within the framework of sociological analysis of literature".[28]

The study of national literature fosters a discussion of the institutional background of the literature:

> ... a descriptive analysis of the network of agencies operating in the production of literature, in its diffusion (publishers), in its transmission (schools), in its evaluation (newspapers, academies, literary prizes), in the training of writers and readers.[29]

Similarly, George M.A.M. Ngal states:

> Le corps de la littérature d'une nation peut ainsi être envisagé comme la corporation des écrivains, des institutions littéraires (associations, jurys de prix, bibliothèques, etc.). Dans les deux sens, la littérature est un fait culturel et national. "National", car les corpus entretient d'abord avec la (ou les) langue(s) nationale(s) un rapport de contrat d'appartenance linguistique. Elle n'existe donc pas en dehors du fait national, dans un sens intégrateur et polysémique.[30]

It is also necessary to examine the theoretical implications for the study of multi-ethnic and poly-lingual literatures. As Gérard points out in his study of Ghanaian literature:

> The study of any "national literature" in Africa is bound to be effected on a translinguistic basis, that is, with the methods and techniques evolved by comparative literature.[31]

He calls for the formulation of a methodology for analysing the poly-ethnic and multi-lingual state of national literatures in Africa. What is the basis for associating creative works in many languages with a national literary system? There is the need for a theoretical framework capable of processing and organizing data obtained from a variety of texts in different languages, a hypothesis that would explain how a variety of heterogeneous data are interrelated.

A leading modern literary theorist, Itamar Even-Zohar of the Porter Institute of Poetics and Semiotics in Tel Aviv, has formulated a hypothesis for the study of the phenomenon of different literary systems evolving in contact with each other. In his analysis which he labels the "polysystem hypothesis", Even-Zohar postulates that the literary system is "heterogeneous, not homogeneous ... a system of systems".[32] Literature is a dynamic system, consisting of many sub-systems that interconnect. It is

> necessarily, a polysystem - a multiple system, a system of various systems which intersect with each other and partly overlap, using concurrently different options, yet functioning as one structured whole, whose members are independent.[33]

Even-Zohar cites the example of central Europe during the Middle Ages wherein the literary system comprised many sub-systems. The literary system was a multiplicity of intersections. The centre was controlled by written literature in Latin while literature in the European languages was peripheral.

Even-Zohar's theory and the models he uses have great relevance for the African situation. His systemic methodology facilitates the discussion of literatures of nations with multiple languages: "The purpose of the polysystem is to make explicit the conception of the system as dynamic and heterogeneous".[34] It helps to clarify the paradox of, for example, ascribing the description "Ghanaian literature" to a literary text in English by a Ghanaian author. By applying Even-Zohar's theory, it is possible to see the connections between the different modes of literature in Ghana, and also the links between Ghanaian literature and other literatures (Togolese and Nigerian).

It must be emphasised, however, that given the present state of research on Ghanaian literature, the polysystem (P/S) theory has limited application for Ghana. As I will demonstrate in the next two chapters, data on Ghanaian literary history is much too inadequate for an effective use of Even-Zohar's theory. However, the value of the P/S theory for this study lies mainly in its of the directions for research on Ghanaian literary history and consequently the shaping of the concept of national literature in Ghana.

It is also important to establish another caveat here: Even-Zohar's postulation of dynamism of literature as involving a centre-peripheral relationship ("the centre of the whole polysystem is identical with the most prestigious canonized system")[35] would not apply to all literatures.

George Lang has disputed that claim and has demonstrated through his research of Creole literatures that

> Centered-ness may actually inhere in data themselves or may be but an effect of our modelling of literatures. The data allow for an original and independent construction of a centre at any point in the system.[36]

Written literature in western languages has been promoted as the centre of African literature, but that is partly because of the intellectual and linguistic limitations of the literary scholars. A vast amount of the literature is in languages and modes inaccessible to many of the scholars. Also, it should be explained by what measure these conclusions are reached. Is the centre determined by sale figures or by the number of potential readers? Or, should the centre be judged according to the literary taste of the educated people?

The Belgian literary theorist, José Lambert and the Canadian scholars, M.V. Dimic and C. Moisan also recognize the system approach as an appropriate means for analyzing the relations between literatures with linguistic and cultural differences that co-exist within one political entity. The traditional concept of national literature as literary expressions in the national language is no longer tenable; it has been replaced with a hypothesis capable of elucidating the several features of the national literary system. This methodology advances the investigation of the historical evolution of literature and the study of the numerous institutions and extra-literary factors that stimulate the development of a national literature.

The polysystem theory provides an effective framework to examine the mechanisms that shape the national literature and to explain how literature is organised. Literature does not just happen, foresaking the testimonies of the ancient and classical poets about receiving divine inspirations from muses, gods or whatever. A literary work does not suddenly appear, fully formed, as Athena emerged from the head of Zeus. Instead, literature results from collaborations at various levels of production, distribution and consumption. Ricard emphasises the need to examine the "institutional contexts of production and diffusion" of literature. The P/S hypothesis permits the examination of the institutions that "create" the literary product.

In the study of national literature, the P/S theory provides a basis for examining the roles of writers, publishers, readers, critics, teachers, librarians, etc. This methodology enhances the perception of the importance of economic and sociological factors in the formation of national literature. By the P/S approach, national literature can be studied, not in terms of its uniqueness or the achievements of a few of its authors, but on the basis of the organization of literature within the country and in relation to other literary systems. It permits the inclusion of all modes and forms of literature, rather than just a few excellent texts. National literature is thus defined as encompassing diverse texts and modes, unsettled issues, controversies, influences and pseudo-literary factors which together account for the particular literary system.

Notes

[1] Albert Gérard, "The Study of African Literature: Birth and Early Growth of a New Branch of Learning," Canadian Review of Comparative Literature 7.1 (Winter 1980): 87.

[2] Elizabeth Pryse, "Getting into Perspective," Nigeria Magazine 74 (1972): 10.

[3] Adrian Roscoe, Mother is Gold (Cambridge: UP, 1971), x.

[4] Cited in G. D. Killam, "A Canadian Critic and Teacher of Commonwealth Literature," Individual and Community in Commonwealth Literature, ed., Daniel Massa (Msida: Univ. of Malta P., 1979), 26.

[5] Mineke Schipper,"National Literature and Literary History," Research in African Literatures 18.3 (Fall, 1987): 285.

[6] Harry Blamires, ed., Twentieth Century Literature in English (London and New York: Meutheun, 1983), xiv.

[7] Obianjunwa Wali, "The Dead End of African Literature," Transition 3.10 (1963): 14.

[8] Chinua Achebe, Morning Yet on Creation Day (London: HEB, 1975), 62.

[9] Ibid, 59.

[10] Lalage Bown "Perspectives on African Prose and Writing in English: A Perspective," Perspectives on African Literature, ed., Christopher Heywood (London: HEB, 1971), 33.

[11] Kofi Anyidoho, "Mythmaker and Mythbreaker: The Oral Poet as Earwitness," African Literature in its Social and Political Dimensions, eds, Eileen Julien, et al. (Washington, D.C.: Three Continental Press, 1986), 12-13.

[12] Gérard, "The Study of African Literature," 76. Gérard quite rightly identifies the new trend of embracing national elements in Africa. But I disagree with the impression he creates that this new awareness is at the expense of, or, because of, the weakening of continental identity. African people did not renounce their continental links in order to affirm their national identity. In Africa today, Nationalism, Africanism and Pan-Africanism have reinforced each other serving a common movement.

[13] François Jost, Introduction to Comparative Literature, (Indianapolis and New York: Pegasus, 1974), 29.

[14] Peter Nagy, "National Literature - World Literature - Comparative Literature," *Neohelicon* 10.2 (1983): 98.

[15] Rene Wellek, *A History of Modern Criticism: The Later Nineteenth Century* iv. (Cambridge: UP, 1986), 33.

[16] A. N. Ebeogu, "African Literature: Regional, National and Ethnic Imperatives," *Ariel* 14.1 (January, 1983): 27.

[17] Clive Wake, "Nigeria, Africa and the Caribbean: A Bird's view," *Introduction to Nigerian Literature*, ed., Bruce King (Lagos : Africana Publishing Corporation, 1972), 194

[18] François Jost, *Essais de littérature comparée* 1 Helvetica (Fribourg: Universitaires de Fribourg, 1964), 323.

[19] Willa Muir, *On Translation*, ed. R. H. Brower (New York: Galaxy 1960), 69.

[20] Emeka-Okeke Ezeigbo, "What is a National Literature?" *Nigeria Magazine* 147 (1984): 4.

[21] Volker Strung, "Canadian Literary Criticism and the Problem of "National Literature"," *The History and Historiography of Commonwealth Literature*, 71.

[22] Olympe Bhêly-Quénum, "Un concept diviseur," *Afrique Nouvelle* 1908 (12 fevrier, 1986): 18.

[23] Cited by Lucien Houedanou, "Frontières mouvantes," *Afrique Nouvelle* 1906 (29 janvier, 1986): 16.

[24] Gérard "Introduction," *European Languagage Writing in Sub-Saharan Africa*, ed., Albert Gerard (Budapest: Akademiai Kiado, 1986), 35.

[25] Virginia Coulon et al., "Forward," *Research in African Literatures* 18.3 (Fall, 1987): 269.

[26] Gérard, "Toward a National History of Ghanaian Literature: A Case study in Methodology," *The History and Historiography of Commonwealth Literature*, 92.

[27] Alain Ricard, "Museum, Mausoleum or Market: The Concept of National Literature," *Research in African Literatures* 18.3 (Fall, 1987): 294.

[28] *Ibid*, 298.

[29] *Ibid*.

[30] George M. A. M. Ngal, "La critique et les anthologies littéraires nationales," Research in African Literatures 18.3 (Fall, 1897): 323.

[31] Gérard, "Toward a National History of Ghanaian Literature: A Case Study in Methodology," 91.

[32] Ithamar Even-Zohar, "Foreward," Papers in Poetics and Semiotics 8 (1978): 7.

[33] Even-Zohar, "Polysystem Theory," Poetics Today 1, 1-2 (1978): 290.

[34] Ibid.

[35] George Lang, "Periphery as Paradigm: Creole Literatures and The Polysystem," Poetics Today 8, 3-4 (1987): 535.

36 Ibid.

Chapter Two

Major Considerations for the Literary History of Ghana

Data

In his essay "Toward a National History of Ghanaian Literture: A Case Study of Methodology", Albert Gérard states uncharacteristically that

> the task of the present-day historians [of Ghanaian Literature] cannot go beyond tracing and hoarding documents and other data that will be of use to future discussions.[1]

This declaration from such an excellent and industrious scholar is surprising. But Gerard is only being realistic. The problem facing the literary historian of Ghana is basic: the lack of data. He must conduct research in archives and depositories scattered in several countries; analyse texts in several languages; and transcribe and translate texts of oral literature. Even after much has been done, there is a feeling that one has merely touched the surface of the subject, making the subsequent tasks of classifying the data and of making decisions about generic issues seem almost futile.

A. W. Cardinall, whose book A Bibliography of the Gold Coast, published in 1932, was one of the earliest compendia on Ghanaian writing, recognised the monumental task ahead of him in his study of Ghanaian literature.

> It was of course evident that from the historical and political point of view a search had to be made in all those countries which had had direct intercourse with the

> Gold Coast. Thus Holland, Denmark, Portugal, Sweden, France, and Prussia were certain to hold records either published or not, of value to the student interested in the country.[2]

Cardinall's own research took him to archives and depositories across many countries. He had to be proficient in several European languages (German, Portuguese, Danish and of course English) in order to conduct his study. Yet, his book does not even include texts in Ghanaian languages.

Data on Ghanaian literature are still scattered and incomplete. In all likelihood there is probably a large body of undiscovered data on this literary system. Unfortunately, much of what is available is in very poor condition. For example, it is known that a large body of material on early literary activities in Hausa and Arabic in Northern Ghana is housed in research centres in Germany. The German scholar, K.A. Krause has researched Hausa manuscripts in Berlin that relate to history and trade relations between the Dagomba and Gonja in the nineteenth century.

Some of the texts may never be found since they have been lost through theft, eaten by termites, etc.. For instance, The Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, (IASUG), which has been collecting and compiling Hausa-Arabic literary works in Ghana, discovered to its dismay that some of the works of distinguished writer al-Hajj Umar ibn Abi Bakr al-Salhawi of Kete Krachi (1850-1934) had been eaten by ants and could not be restored. To acquire the literary works the IASUG research group of Islamic intellectuals and religious leaders visited Salaga, Kimtampo, Kete Krachi in Northern Ghana, and depositories of mosques in Northern Nigeria. Still, our knowledge about the literary achievement of Umar is limited:

> Some 40 of [Umar's works in Arabic and Hausa] are so far known to us but it seems clear that his total literary output was much greater.[3]

The discovery of Umar's writing is exciting and literary historians have been challenged "to bring to light more ancient remnants of such Arabic and ajami writing as might have been produced under Muslim influence".[4]

The full extent of the Ghanaian literary system may never be known. The unearthing of fresh data tends to undermine previous information. Thus conclusions can only be tentative. A good illustration is the discovery of the unpublished manuscripts of the early Ghanaian dramatist, Kobina Sekyi, at the Cape Coast National Archives. Before the 1970's, Sekyi was known as a social commentator, political activist, nationalist and statesman, who was influenced by Casely-Hayford. Little was known about his literary achievement which dated back as early as 1915, when he wrote the manuscripts for The Blinkards, a light satire about the mannerisms of 'Anglo-influenced' Ghanaians.

There was hardly any further interest in Sekyi as a dramatist until 1974 when The Blinkards was published. Suddenly, there was enthusiasm about this dramatic work. Other manuscripts by Sekyi which were previously unknown to scholars, sixty-two poems, two plays and a number of short stories, were dug out from underneath layers of dust at the Cape Coast National Archives. Literary critics, Ayo Langley and Asiedu Yerenkyi wrote in 1974 and 1977, respectively, about Sekyi, the literary figure, and have attributed to him the title of the "founding father of the Ghanaian theatre."[5] Since then, Sekyi, who used to attract only slight critical attention, has been generally upheld as a major literary figure, an early precursor of Ghanaian dramatic literature.

In light of these findings about Sekyi's writing, Gérard has called for renewed efforts to reconstruct the missing gaps in the literary history of Ghana.

> The discovery and publication in 1974 of a satirical comedy entitled The Blinkards by a lawyer, Kobina Sekyi (1892-1956) who had it performed in Cape Coast [and Achimota and other parts of Accra] during World War I may undoubtedly be hailed as an intimation that other creative works still remain undiscovered, either in manuscript form, or in the dusty files of local newspapers. Obviously, Ghanaian literature of the early century should be subjected to historical scrutinzing.[6]

The uncertainty about the true extent of the Ghanaian literary system is shared by George Lang. He has doubts about the reliability of some biographical data on Ghanaian writing.

> The roots of Ghanaian literature stretch back as far as 1909 when The Seductive Coast: Poems Lyrical and Descriptive from West Africa appeared. There are some grounds for

> suspicion that the author, O. Dazi Ako, was actually an Englishman by the name of J.M. Stuart-Young.[7]

If one is to believe Lang's assertion and the experience of other researchers, it is evident that the need for reliable data on Ghanaian literature is crucial.

Bibliographical Challenges

Prefatory comments and analyses of bibliographies on Ghana by A.F. Johnson, David Brokensha and S.I. Kotei, Christian Agoulu and Margaret Patten, and also the annual bibliographical series, Ghana National Bibliography, issued by the Ghana Library Board, show that the problem of data has not been attenuated over the years. A brief review of bibliographies and literary histories on Ghanaian writing will confirm this observation. With few exceptions, notably Patten's Bibliography on Ghanaian Writing and the selected bibliography of Richard Priebe's Ghanaian Writing, the bibliographies of Ghanaian writing are not purely literary. Cardinall's Bibliography of Ghana was "issued as a companion volume to the Census Report of 1931"(i). He assembled data on books, pamphlets, journals, official documents and manuscripts of the Gold Coast dating from the time of the European arrival to the period of British Colonial rule. The listings cover a motley mixture of subjects including travel accounts, culture, politics, grammar, religion, etc. There are the occasional entries on literary writings, such as

Mrs. Aphra Behn's Oronoko and W.F. Hedges' unpublished poem, "Christiansborg Castle and other verses".

Johnson's A Bibliography of Ghana (1930-1961) continues (with only a slight modification of the format) the chronological detailing of the literary history of Ghana. He includes "works of technical and scientific interest, translations and pure literature, but vernacular texts have been omitted".[8] G.M. Pitcher's Bibliography of Ghana 1957-1959 consists of listings of publications during the first two years of Ghana's independence. There is little variation in the chronological detailing of miscellaneous writing on Ghana. Another general bibliography on Ghana, Brokensha and Kotei's "A Bibliography of Ghana: 1958-64" features literary and non-literary items. Even the highly acclaimed Ghana in the Humanities and Social Sciences: A Bibliography by Christian Chukwunedu Aguolu uses this format of chronological arrangement of writing on Ghana.

Entries on literature in these general bibliographies are limited. A few notable handbooks and official guides such as John Maxwell's The Gold Coast Handbook (1928) which includes a survey of the population by R.S. Rattray and D.O. Bampoe's A Guide to the Official Publications of Ghana (Gold Coast) 1600-1966 yield only baseline information on Ghana. However, in Ghana National Bibliography, there are substantial listings of publications of literary works in Ghanaian and Non-Ghanaian languages. Other bibliographies which devote substantial space to literary entries include:

Dennis Warren's The Akan Literature of Ghana: a Bibliography (1972) and S.I.A. Kotei's The Akan of Ghana: a Select Bibliography.

Some general bibliographies of African literature, such as, Barbara Abrash's Black African Literature in English since 1952: Works and Criticism (1967) and Bernth Lindfors' Black African Literature in English (1976), Black Africa Literature in English 1977-1981 Supplement (1986) and Black African Literature in English 1982-1986 (1989), include considerable entries on Ghanaian literature. Another valuable publication, Donald Herdeck's African Authors: A Companion to Black African Writing Vol. 1 1300-1973, provides detailed information on Ghanaian authors and their works. In addition to details about the year and place of publication, Herdeck gives other relevant information (such as the background of writers and the circumstances for the publications) which might help to increase interest in the texts. These bibliographies and handbooks are useful for the reconstruction of the literary history of Ghana. However it is necessary to verify information in several bibliographies and to be cautious with those works which rely heavily on secondary sources. Primary texts, especially early editions, are some of the most authentic source of informatiom.

Nationality: A Basis for Determining Ghanaian Writing

The literary historian must also determine which authors and what texts are to be recognised as Ghanaian writing. A practical solution would be to include the works of all writers who originate from this political unit, eliminating multi-linguistic and ethnic difficulties. However, there are some major problems when nationality is the only basis for determining Ghanaian writing. Some of the writers (Gladys Casely-Hayford, Parkes, etc.) have claim to dual nationality. A few of them (Anto Wilhein Amo, Ignatius Sancho, Raphael Armattoe, etc.) spent a great deal or all of their lives/literary careers in foreign countries. Also many non-Ghanaians (Margaret Laurence and Edward Braithwaite) have written about Ghana and have been included in bibliographies on Ghana.

The nationality litmus is difficult to apply to writers, like Gladys Casely-Hayford who have dual nationality. Her father was the Ghanaian nationalist, J.E. Casely-Hayford and mother, a Sierra Leonean, Mabel Casely-Hayford. Gladys Casely-Hayford has written poems in the English language about Ghana under the pseudonym Aqua Laluah, and also extensively in the Sierra Leone Krio language about Sierra Leone. The problem her dual nationality creates is indicated by the fact that Margaret Patten excludes the poems of Gladys Casely-Hayford from Ghana Imaginative Writings in English: 1950-1965 on the basis of her nationality, but Langston Hughes lists her as a Ghanaian writer in An African Treasury and Poems from Black Africa. Another example is the case of Kobina Parkes who, like Gladys Casely-Hayford, was born in Sierra Leone of mixed parentage. Parkes was educated at Adisadel College, Cape Coast and he later joined the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation as a radio editor.

Some literary works on Ghana by non-Ghanaians have been listed in bibliographies of Ghanaian writing. Examples are This Side Jordan and The To-morrow Tamer and Other Stories by Margaret Laurence which have been included in bibliographies of Ghanaian writing by Christian Aguolu and Brokensha and Kotei. This Side Jordan is significant because of its exploration of the independence era as well as its treatment of the subject of tradition versus modernity, a recurrent theme in modern Ghanaian writing. Another example is Edward Braithwaite's Mask: Poems which has been included in Aguolu's bibliography. This collection of poetry, which deals with subjects ranging from slavery and desolation to present problems, was written during eight years the West Indian poet lived in Ghana.

The determination of Ghanaian writing on the basis of nationality is further tested by Ghanaian expatriate writers such as eighteenth century Ghanaian-born writers, Ignatius Sancho and Ottobah Cugoano, who were sent to America and Europe as slaves but later regained their freedom. These ex-slave writers together with Anton Wilhein Amo, another eighteenth century Ghanaian expatriate writer, censured the slave trade and the institutions that profited from it. Because they spent their adult lives and professional careers in western countries, these Ghanaian writers are often seen as belonging to those traditions. This perception has virtually gone unchallenged since most of the critics who first gained access to the works of Amo and others were westerners who seemed to have no strong desire to look for the other cultural, national and political connections of these writers. Such was the case of Paul Edwards, a leading British scholar of eighteenth century African writing.

The authenticity of Amo, Sancho and Cugoano as Ghanaian writers has been challenged. Amo's dissertations and disputations are said to follow German scholarly traditions. He was a distinguished philosopher and scholar of international repute with knowledge of German, English, Greek, Latin, French and Hebrew. Amo lectured in Jena and other German universities and only retreated to Axim, Ghana during the last few years of his life.

In his introduction to Letters of The Late Ignatius Sancho, Edwards argues that Sancho is very much part of English literary tradition. He points out that Sancho, who was a trader and a self-taught educated man, enjoyed British lower middle class life with its music, literature and religion, but also impressed English writers of the day:

> [The] letters are those of a man thoroughly assimilated into the middle-class English society of his day; an amateur of literature and music, a critic of painting and sculpture, a friend of Sterne and Garrick, the subject of a portrait by Gainsborough, the respectable and respected servant of a noble family, the moderately prosperous shopkeeper. Sancho was a friend of Sterne and the Letters was very much in the epistolary tradition. His death on December 14, 1780 was

> accordingly announced in the Gentleman's Magazine: "Mr Ignatius Sancho, ... a character immortalized by the epistolary correspondence of Sterne".[9]

Edwards, who also wrote the introduction on Cugoano's Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil of Slavery (London, Dawnsons of Paul Mall, 1787), argues that this writer, like Sancho and Olaudah Equiano (their Nigerian counterpart) is very much part of the British literary tradition. He declares: "only occasionally do we hear the voice of the African and former slave in these [works]".[10]

It is not clear how early Africans and Africanists got to know about the works of Sancho and the others. However, in the past two decades of this century, there has been a revival of interest in the works of the early African expatriates. Janhein Jahn, Gérard, Obiechina and Keith Sandiford reject Edwards' position that the authors in question belong to the western literary tradition. These critics consider the works of Sancho, Amo and others among the earliest written literature in European languages by Africans. Gérard and his colleages also credit these literary works for depicting the experience of racial prejudice and slavery and for expressing African nationalism. Jahn writes:

> If we disregard Juan Latino, whose origins are exactly unknown, African writing began with Anton Wilhem Amo who came from Axim in what is now Ghana .... Early in the eighteenth century, he made his way to Germany via Holland and eventually published

> his dissertation in Wittenberg in the Latin language. Also from Ghana were his contemporaries, Jacob Elisa Capitein who argued in scholarly Latin that the slave trade and Christian liberty were perfectly compatible and Ottoba Cugoano, who censured the slave trade in English in 1787.[11]

Gérard also makes the following observation about early Ghanaian literature: "It would thus appear somewhat paradoxically that slavery laid the first foundation for a national Ghanaian written literature".[12] Also, Sandiford describes Sancho, Cugoano and Equiano as "three Black men of uncommon ability [who] translated the experience of their encounter with racial prejudice and slavery in literary form".[13] For his part, Obiechina traces the origin of African literature to "the writers among African's lost children" who,

> like Coleridge's Ancient Mariner, a few dispersed children of Africa poured their tales into the ears of their audiences and eased the pressure upon their own hearts.[14]

The Literary Worthiness of Some Ghanaian Prose Writing

Besides the major question about identity, the literary quality of some Ghanaian writing is also disputed. There are doubts about the literary worthiness of early prose and essays which were in vogue in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and became the form favored by nationalists like J.E. Casely-Hayford, J. B. Danquah and Kwame Nkrumah. However, Lalage Bown argues persuasively that these writings are legitimate literary works. She calls for an objective definition of creative literature:

> The creative word used for classifying has its justification, but is open to mistrusts, since there is just as much laborious creation in producing a well-written pamphlet as there is in making a play or a short story.[15]

Bown justifies including Ghanaian prose writing such as Carl Reindorf's The History of the Gold Coast and Asante and Nkrumah's I Speak of Freedom: A Statement of African Ideology in the literary history:

> One would not dismiss from English literature, the letters of Lord Chesterfield, the diaries of Pepys or the historical works of Lord Macauley. By the same token, one should not dismiss these kinds of writing [Reindorf's The History of the Gold Coast and Asante, 1895 and Ferguson's Report of a Mission to the Interior, 1892] if one is considering the growth of African literature. (38)

In any case, Bown points out, Reindorf's The History of the Gold Coast and Asante and George Ekem Ferguson's Reports of the Mission to the Interior contain sections which have aesthetic appeal. She cites one example of creative expression in The History of the Gold Coast, the section where the Fante ruler, King Frimpong first encounters a whiteman. Bown praises Reindorf's skill at prose writing, declaring that The History of the Gold Coast and Asante is

> enchantingly written. There are magnificent descriptions, including one or two set-piece battles, and Reindorf had a good sense of the dramatic, of working up to a climax. The piece about King Frimpong and the hapless Dutch book-keeper displays a delightful humor and is a well-told story. Reindorf's work seems to me to be of literary, as well as of historical, value. (36)

As the quantity of Ghanaian literature increased, the debate about literariness of prose and essay died down. Recently, however, this argument has centered around another artistic mode, popular literature. While literary critics question the literary viability of this type of literature, most readers in urban areas readily accept it. However, a few scholars such as Ime Ikiddeh and Richard Priebe, argue persuasively that the aesthetic qualities of popular literature can be appreciated when it is assessed within appropriate contexts of the social, cultural and economic factors which produce this literature. Priebe notes further that there are significant thematic links between popular literature and the writings of Armah and Awoonor. This issue will be dealt with further in Chapter Seven.

The Status of Ghanaian Literature in English

A fundamental issue for literary historians of Ghana is the status of Ghanaian writing in English. This matter is fraught with questions relating to Ghana's colonial past and the desire for cultural independence. In Ghana, English is the official language for government, business and education. It is the language for broadcasting on Ghana Broadcasting Corporation Station Two (GBC 2) and for publishing The Daily Graphic, The Ghanaian Times, The Mirror and The Weekly Spectator, the national newspapers. English, has the advantage of not being linked to one particular ethnic group and has been used to rally support for anti-colonialism and nationalism. Moreover it is a language for international communication.

However, even though they write in English, most Ghanaian writers have shown a clear preference for the use of their indigenous languages. One of the earliest comments on the use of western languages by Africans came from Casely-Hayford who called for the teaching of Fante and other indigenous languages in schools in Ghana. In Ethiopia Unbound, Kwamankra, the protagonist, declares that he prefers to speak in his native Fante.[16] The early Ghanaian writer points out that Fante language, customs and values are as vibrant and sound as any other.

Casely-Hayford's contemporary, Kobina Sekyi, has also addressed the language issue. In The Blinkards, he satirised the estrangement of educated Africans from their indigenous society:

> I speak English to soften my harsher tongue:
> It matters not if I speak the Fanti wrong.
> I am learning to be British and treat with due contempt
> The worship of the fetish, from which I am exempt.[17]

The Anglo-Fante would lisp, mimic and put great pressure on their breathing organs in order to "sound" like English people. By assimilating western culture they have become alienated from their local traditions. The cause of this was undoubtedly the western-type educational systems in Africa whose overall aim was to train students to be proficient in western languages and to learn about western values and technology.

Following the example of their early compatriots, many post-Independence Ghanaian writers have expressed their clear bias for the native tongue. Supporting the positions of Casely-Hayford and Sekyi, the Ghanaian poet, Adali-Mortty addresses this issue in his poem "Belonging," which was published in Messages: Poems From Ghana (1971):

> You may excel
> in knowledge of their tongue
> and universal ties may bind you close to
> them;
> but what they say, and how they feel --
> the subtler details of meaning,
> thinking feeling, reaching --
> these are closed to you and me forever more;
> As are, indeed them in leaves of speech
> -- Our speech -- which falls on them
> no more that were they dead leaves
> in dust -- dry harmattan.[18]

Dr. Mohammed Ben Abdallah, a dramatist of distinction and Secretary for Information, states:

> We [Ghanaian/African intellectuals] are the only people who in our country have to be interpreted to our own people when we speak to them! This situation has to change.[19]

It is interesting to note that while Ghanaian authors, who write regularly in English, have expressed their preference for writing in Ghanaian languages, few of them have actually crossed over to produce literature in local languages. This anomaly is probably due to the education of these writers. It recalls not only their personal dilemmas, but also the general problem of defining Ghanaian literature in English.

A comparative assessment of the language controversy in African literature is necessary in order to acquire some understanding which is relevant to the study of Ghanaian literature. Discussions on language for African writing have far-reaching implications for the reconstruction of literary history. The common historical experience throughout Africa strengthens the argument for a general approach to the language issue. Moreover, Ghanaian writers, like many others, have addressed this issue from a broad platform.

The high points of the language debate in scholarship on African literature are many; the polemics are profound and the emotions are deep. Discussion of the language issue reached a temporary climax at a conference of African writers at Makerere University, Uganda (1962). A major consequence of the conference was that it brought an urgency to the language problem. It was ironic that writers who write in African languages, such as D.O. Fagunwa (Nigeria), were not invited, even though the conference was supposed to be an African writers' meeting.

Partly in reaction to the proceedings at the Makerere Conference and partly to state his own position on the language problem, Obianjunwa Wali, a Nigerian critic, wrote in his seminal "The Dead End of English in African Literature":

> The uncritical acceptance of English and French as the inevitable medium for educated African writing is misdirected and has no chance of advancing African literature and culture..... until these writers and their Western midwives accept the fact that any true African literature must be written in African languages, they would be merely pursuing a dead end, which can only lead to sterility, uncreativity and frustration.[20]

It is unpardonable for African writers to continue to write in foreign languages, when "Africans are in crying need of this kind of development," says Mr. Wali. In any case, African literature in western expression "lacks stamina and has no means of self-expression".[21]

Wali's provocative essay stimulated discussion of the language issue. A number of writers/critics have expanded or challenged Wali's main thesis. Two well-formulated contrasting positions have been taken by Ngugi who supports Wali's view and Achebe who disputes it.

Ngugi challenges the legitimacy of African writing in Western languages. For him this type of literature can be meaningfully titled "Afro-European literature".[22] Like Wali, Ngugi is not willing to be what might be described as the step-child of western culture. He endorses Wali's contention that the term "African literature" should be applicable only to creative works by Africans in African languages.

As a writer, Ngugi is naturally sensitive to the use of language. He is committed to his people with whom he must communicate; he should speak to them in a tongue they understand; the chosen linguistic medium ought to reflect his identity. The choice is not the linguistic medium in which Ngugi is most proficient. Much less is it determined by the number of people with whom he can communicate. Ngugi's first desire is to speak with the Gikuyu people and with the people of Kenya. As a Gikuyu writer, Ngugi can draw upon the wealth of lores which are enshrined in his native language, while his writing would enrich that language itself.

Ngugi's sincerity and personal commitment are clear: for him language is a means of empowerment, a tool to be used to advance the national culture. In Africa, Ngugi argues, English (or French or Portuguese) has always been the language of the educated people, the elite. The majority of the people of Africa are not literate in western languages. The choice to write in a foreign language effectively precludes a great number of potential readers from participating in literature. Ngugi believes that the majority, mostly ordinary peasants and workers, are his immediate constituency and by no means would he nor could he communicate with them through the medium of English. His denunciation of African writing in western languages is fundamental: it is neither African enough nor does it reflect an African national identity.

Chinua Achebe, a leading exponent of the opposing critical position, considers European languages as unfortunate but meaningful choices for African writing. He believes that African writers can effectively use English, French or Portuguese to express the nuances, idioms and sensibilities of the African world and that they should use the acquired western languages to serve the interest of Africa. The limitation of European languages as the language of only the educated people is compensated for by them being linguae francae for Africans from different linguistic constituencies. Achebe states that:

> The African writer should aim to use English in a way to bring out his message best without altering the language to the extent that its values as a medium of international exchange will be lost. He should aim at fashioning out an English which is at once universal and able to carry his peculiar experience.[23]

He is convinced that

> The English language will be able to carry the weight of [his] African experiences. But it will be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home, but altered to suit its new African surroundings. (103)

It is indeed a sad irony that most Africans, like the peoples of the Indian subcontinent as well as other places can communicate meaningfully with one another only through foreign linguistic systems. Given the immense linguistic disorganization in Africa, therefore, it is necessary to adopt a pragmatic approach to the language problem. Ayi Kwei Armah cautions against a needlessly sentimental attitude to the language issue:

> Long before the I.M.F. went into the business of devaluating African currencies, all African languages were assigned low values as tribal languages within the colonial system. These days there is a trend to call these humiliated languages national languages. Within that perspective, African writers are called upon to write in their respective languages.[24]

Perhaps there would be a deepening of the language problem if every African writer decided to write in his language. Perhaps not. Armah believes that Africa's language

> ... problem is not insoluble. But any solution will depend on the choice of one common, central language in all African schools, alongside the current official languages it will eventually replace. No African will be denied access to foreign languages, but all will be competent in one African language.[25]

Armah calls for the adoption of Kiswahili, the major language in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa, as a lingua franca throughout Africa.

> Kiswahili enjoys structural and lexical affinities with a lot of languages over large areas of the continent. Flexible and highly absorptive, it can take inputs from practically every African language in its future development.[26]

Although it has been argued that Kiswahili is not an authentic African language, given the fact that it is a blend of Persian, Arabic and African languages, it has become a native tongue for many Africans and is considered an African language by most Africans.

It is quite tempting to agree with Armah, but it is almost certain that a decision for a continent-wide use of Kiswahili would be contested by the users of other major African languages such as Akan and Yoruba. Also, Hausa has an international status in West Africa and would compare well with Kiswahili. Besides, Armah's proposal is for the future and would not alter the past or present state of literature in Africa. The literary historian must deal with all the phases of literature within the national or continental entity.

It is necessary to formulate tenable hypotheses on the nature of language. Language is a system of communication that is used for a number of purposes including literary ones. It seems to me that most of the contributors to the debate about language in African literature do not determine whether the problem is primarily linguistic or literary. Language is not a monolithic system; it is tied to several other systems. Nor is a literary system synonymous with a language system. The mechanisms governing a literary system, though closely connected with a language system, are not identical to those of the latter. Language is a major, but not the sole, determinant of literature. Many of the critics who have written about the language problem in African literature overlook the distinctions that exist between language and literary systems.

Achebe gives a practical illustration of these differences:

> I want one of my sons to join these people and be my eyes there. But if there is nothing in it you will come back. But if there is something there you will bring home my share. The world is like a mask, dancing. If you want to see it well, you do not stand in one place. My spirit tells me that those who do not befriend the whiteman today will be saying had we known tomorrow. (101)

Achebe restates the same message another way:

> I am sending you as my representative among these people -- just to be on the safe side in case the new religion develops. One has to move with the times or else one is left behind. I have a hunch that those who fail to come to terms with the white man will regret their lack of foresight. (102)

Achebe attempts to show the difference between literary and standard language. In the first example he uses elements such as metaphors, similes and nuances to capture the speech patterns of his characters. It is clear that in this instance the principles of standard language are subordinated to the rules of the literary system. The mechanisms of the literary language are imposed on those of standard language.[27] In the second example, Achebe seeks to maintain the laws, structures and devices of standard English.

There is a new dimension when the language issue is examined within the context of the history of national and African literature. By my definition, the concept of national literature comprises all the forms and modes of literature with a country; this means literatures in both native and non-native languages. This definition allows for the inclusion of literatures in European and indigenous languages as well as oral literature.

Other Problems of Literary History Relating to Ghana

Some of the present literary histories and surveys of Ghanaian literature contain contradictory statements or confusing information. In certain instances some scholars actually distort the history of Ghanaian literature. For example, in his prefactory comments entitled "A Note of History," the editor of Voices of Ghana, Swanzy, has this to say about Ghanaian literature:

> There is in fact, nothing at the moment in print, apart from political and biographical writing, led by Nkrumah's autobiography, which attempts to portray, in however modest a way, the life of the people of one the newest sovereign states.[28]

Thus Swanzy begins his introduction to Voices. But by the end of the essay, he renders his own position (cited above) invalid. Indeed, much of Swanzy's essay is a synopsis of Ghanaian writing prior to Independence.

Kojo Senanu's introductory statement in Ghanaian Writing is also questionable:

> Any survey of Ghanaian creative writing must of course begin with the anthologies Voices of Ghana (1958) and Messages (1968).[29]

Through a large portion of his essay, Senanu proceeds to criticise important publications on Ghanaian writing. He censors these works for shoddy scholarship, yet, ironically, Senanu himself distorts the literary history of Ghana. In the above quotation he has obliterated all literary works antecedent to Voices. Senanu has overlooked the significant contributions to Ghanaian literature by Cugoano, Casely-Hayford, Armattoe, Dei-Anang, Obianim and Fiawoo, not to mention the numerous publications in popular literature.

Conclusion

These conceptual complexities and practical considerations (lack of adequate date, questions about nationality, etc.) make the work of the literary historian of Ghana a challenge if not a nightmare. Unfortunately, scholarship has barely addressed these major issues; many literary historians concentrate on the modern phase which is relatively free of controversy and which has considerable body of data available.

In the face of overwhelming difficulties, it is not surprising that there are only few acceptable literary histories of Ghana. The general inclination has been to include Ghanaian literature in literary histories of Africa or West Africa. An example of this trend is found in Frederic Michelman's "The West African Novel Since 1911". Most of the few satisfactory studies use chronological critera for literary reconstruction. For instance, Kofi Agovi's "A Dual Sensibility: The Short Story in Ghana, 1944," examines the chronological history of this genre in at that time. Other literary histories of Ghana are classified by linguistic division. Examples of this include Nina Pawlak's "Akan Folk Literature and Beginnings of Writings in Twi" and Simon Amegleame's "Naissance et développment d'un corpus imprimé africain: la littérature éwé". These studies are useful for their contributions toward the understanding of selected aspects of Ghanaian literature. In the next chapter I will attempt to provide a more complete literary history of Ghana that encompasses the entire literary system.

Notes

1. Albert Gérard, "Toward a National History of Ghanaian Literature: A Case Study of Methodology," The History and Historiography of Commonwealth Literature, ed., Dieter Riemenschneider (Tubingen: Narr, 1983), 93.

2. A.W. Cardinall, A Bibliography of The Gold Coast West Port, Connecticut: Negro Universities Press, 1932), v.

3. Thomas Hodgkin, "The Islamic Literary Tradition in Ghana," Islam in Tropical Africa, ed., I.M. Lewis (Oxford: U.P., 1966), 453.

4. Gérard, "Toward a National History of Ghanaian Literature," 93. Ajami is the use of Arabic alphabet for non-Arabic languages, such as Hausa.

5. Asiedu Yirenkyi, "Founding Father of the Ghanaian Theatre," Legacy 3, 2(Sept. 1977): 43. Other writings by Sekyi are housed at the Cape Coast Archives under the label "Sekyi Papers, 530/64. According to Yirenkyi, these writings, which include "The Sojourner", a long narrative poem, "To a Little Nurse" a humorous poem and a number of sonnets, show a progression from an angry poetic voice to one that is genial in tone. This collection also includes, Sekyi's review of John Galworthy's The Forest. The location of another work, "Black and Commerce" an unpublished play, is not known; both Yirenkyi ("Founding Father of the Ghanaian Theatre," p.43) and Langley ("Introduction" to The Blinkards, 1974, p.16) note the fact that this text has not been located.

6. Gérard, "Toward a National History of Ghanaian Literature," 94.

7. George Lang, "Ghana and Nigeria," European Language Writing in Sub-Saharan Africa, ed., Albert Gérard (Budapest: Akademiai Kiado, 1986), 108.

8. A.F. Johnson, A Bibliography of Ghana 1930-1961 (London: Longman, 1964), Vii.

9. Paul Edwards, "Introduction," Letters of The Late Ignatius Sancho, ed., Joseph Jekyll Esq. M.P. (London: Paul Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1968), i.

10. Ibid.

11. Janheinz Jahn "Ghana's Written Literature," Ghanaian Writing, eds., A.W. Kayper-Mensah and Horst Wolff (Tubingen: Verlag, 1972), 234.

12. Gérard, "Toward a National History of Ghanaian Literature," 93.

13. Keith A. Sandiford, Measuring The Moment (London and Toronto: Associated Universities Press, 1988), 150. Further reference to this work will be made parenthetically in my text.

14. Emmanuel Obiechina, "Africa's Lost Generations," The Wilson Quarterly (Summer, 1981): 187.

15. Lalage Bown, "Perspectives on African Prose-Writing in English," Perspective on African Literature, ed., Christopher Heyford (London: H.E.B., 1971), 38. Further reference to this work will be made parenthetically in my text.

[16] J.E. Casely-Hayford, Ethiopia Unbound (London: Frank Cass, 1969), 5-7; he declares that education in the Gold Coast "must be in the people's own language," p. 17; this quotation is cited in my Chapter 7.

[17] Kobina Sekyi, The Blinkards: A Comedy (London: HEB, 1984), 46-47.

[18] Adali-Mortty "Belonging" Messages: Poems From Ghana, eds., Kofi Awoonor and G. Adali-Mortty (London: Heinemann, 1970), 42.

[19] Mohamed Ben Abdallah "Interview with Mohamed Ben Abdallah," Africa Report 32.4 (July-August, 1987): 16. A credit at the "Ordinary Level" of the General Certificate of Examination is a compulsory requirement for admission to a university in Ghana.

[20] Obianjunwa Wali "The Dead End of African Literature," Transition 3.10 (1963): 14.

[21] Ibid. Sembene Ousmane is one of many African writers who sides with Wali. In "Interview," African Writers on African Writing (London: HEB, 1973) 150; Ousmane declared that African literature would be subject to the control of others so long as it is written in non-African languages.

[22] Ngugi wa Thiong'o, "A Political Choice," West Africa 3598 (August 18, 1986): 1734. For Ngugi, creative writing by Africans in western languages is a manifestation of neo-colonialism: "the night of the sword and the bullet was followed by the morning of the chalk and the black-board," in "The Language of African Literature," New Left Review 150 (March/April, 1985): 110. The choice of English or French or Portuguese for African literature in effect means bowing to neo-colonialist interest: "by continuing to write in foreign languages that pay homage to the metropolis, are we not

maintaining, on the cultural level, that neo-colonial slavish and cringing spirit?" "Interview with Ngugi," Aarus (1980): 124. According to Ngugi, the African writer has no more excuses for being unable to pursue his literary activities without European languages than the politician has for being unable to do without imperialism.

[23] Achebe, Morning Yet On Creation Day (London: HEB, 1974), 100. Further reference to this work will be made parenthetically in my text. Léopold Sédar, John Pepper Clark and many others agree with Achebe. Senghor believes that French could be effectively used for African literature: "je pense naturellement en français et je comprends le français, faut-il en avoir honte? mieux qu'aucune autre langue. C'est dire que le français pour moi un véhicule étranger, mais la forme d'expression naturelle de ma pensée," (Cited in S. Adotevi, Négritude et négrologues, 1972), 117. Clark maintains that English can be battered and made to carry the weight of African attitudes and values. Similar sentiments have been expressed by the Indian writer, Raja Rao, who describes the language dilemma that the Indian writer, like the African writer, inherited through colonialism: "One has to convey, in a language that is not one's own, the spirit that is one's own, "Introduction," Kanthapura (1937). The language debate has major implications for South Africa. In a desperate attempt to halt mass political movement in South Africa, the racist regime vigorously promotes ethnic rivalry by decreeing the use of Soptho, Zulu and Xhosa for instruction in school (though these languages are not used for government and business) and by cordoning Blacks into zones of arid patches of land which they call homelands. Although English is foreign to Black South Africans, it has served as a common language for their cause, thus helping to undermine efforts of the racist regime to divide the people with language.

[24] Ayi Kwei Armah, "Our Language Problem," West Africa (April 29, 1985): 831. A Similar suggestion was made by Wole Soyinka in "Interview," Kunapipi 9.1 (1987): 61.

[25] Ibid, 832.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Eastern European Formalist Jan Mukarovski makes a distinction between standard and poetic language: "Poetic language is ... not a brand of the standard. This is not to deny the close connection between the two ... the standard is the background against which is reflected the aesthetically intentional distortion of the linguistic components of the work; in other words, the intentional violation of the norm of the standard .... The violation of the norm of the standard, its systematic violation is what

makes possible the poetic utilization of language". "Standard language and poetic language," A Prague School Reader on Aesthetics, Literary Structure and Style, ed. and trans., Paul L. Garvin (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1964), 43.

[28] Henry Swanzy, "A Note of History," Voices of Ghana, ed., Henry Swanzy (Accra: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1958), 11.

[29] K.E. Senanu, "Creative Writing in Ghana," Ghanaian Writing: Ghana as seen by her own Writers as well as German Authors, eds., A.W. Kayper-Mensah and Horst Wolff (Tübingen: Horst Erdmann, 1972), 14.

Chapter Three

A Provisional Literary History: Ghana

Inspired by Gérard whose "Toward a National History of Ghanaian Literature", one of the few works to date which effectively addresses Ghana's ethnic and linguistic diversity and artistic modes and genres, I will attempt to reconstruct a national literary history of Ghana[1] by examining oral literature and undertaking a language by language survey of the emergence of Ghanaian literatures. Also, I will highlight significant literary phenomena, noting their reception by critics and scholars as well as their impact on the Ghanaian literary system. This literary history is provisional since it is based only upon data accessible to me.

Oral Literature

The reconstruction of the literary history of Ghana must begin with oral literature, the first and primary means of artistic expression. As one critic has acknowledged, "long before the writer poet became an eye witness, there was the oral poet as ear witness".[2] And

> ... in spite of the effect of the introduced literary cultural elements, oral tradition still remains a most significant part of the contemporary West African culture.[3]

The artist in Ghana (and other parts of Africa) expressed himself by a variety of communication systems before the introduction of writing. Oral and non-verbal language embody systems of aesthetics and beliefs that are meaningful in the traditions within which they are produced.

An examination of oral literature is necessary in order to demonstrate the diversity of artistic modes of Ghanaian literature. Also, it is important to understand the relation between oral and written traditions since the former constitutes the source and inspiration for the latter. The edifice of much of written literature is based on oral tradition. Some writers, for instance, Kofi Awoonor and Kofi Anyidoho, produce a syncretism of the oral and written forms. Atukwei Okai has also attempted to structure his written poetry in the mode of orature so as to enhance its oral performance. Important contributions on African oral literature by Ruth Finnegan, Jack Goody, Niyi Osundare and other major scholars are vital for understanding oral literature in Ghana as they legitimize it as a major part of the national literary system.

Some of the identifiable oral genres are as follows: poetry (patronage, epic, panegyric, elegy, religious; special purpose poems: war, hunting and work, topical and political songs, and children's songs and rhymes); prose (tales, animal stories, stories about people, myths, legends and historical narratives); proverbs; riddles; oratory; drum language and drama. A study of national literature is inconclusive without a discussion of the structural and existential issues as well as the significance of some of these genres.[4]

Ghanaian musicologist, Kwabena Nketia has written extensively about communication in Ghana through oral and non-verbal language.

> Instead of writing our forefathers used various institutional means for recording and preserving tradition. They made extensive use of symbols and symbolism. Art objects were not created only to give a visual impression: they spoke a language. Ceremonial articles, carved umbrella topo, linguists' staff, even the kente cloth had implications of language: they represented proverbs or maxims, then symbolized events or helped the onlooker to recall a traditional saying, a precept, a bit of traditional history or even a folk tale.[5]

Nketia has researched extensively about the drum and the traditional Adinkra symbolism which he labels very fittingly as surrogate language:

> When a drum is played in speech...the people say that the drum 'speaks' for they listen to their sounds and re-interpret them in terms of speech rather than in terms of music.[6]

The drum is encoded in a system of communication that is meaningful. The drum-beat is loaded with messages: each tune, each beat calls for a specific response which can be deciphered by those who are familiar with that tradition. Drum messages have been effective for making announcements, for summoning the people to gatherings, and for introducing traditional rulers. Some of the drum beats are poetic patterns; they are often used as background for oral presentation. There are disputes as to whether the drum is a form of literature. However, it is clear that the drum serves the vital function of enhancing traditional performances such as dirges and panegyrics.

Another pseudo-literary form which is popular in Ghana involves cloth patterns and designs. In Ghana, Akan and Ewe weavers produce sophisticated designs of *adinkra* and *kente* cloths. Nketia points out that *kente* and *adinkra* patterns and other traditional art forms are loaded with meaning:

> [The] patterns used in the *adinkra* stamped cloth of the Ashanti of Ghana have definite meanings, while the designs of their *kente* cloths also have verbal associations which in the past influenced their choice for wear on particular occasions.[7]

The designs represent messages and illustrate meanings which are known to the people. They encapsulate traditional knowledge and values. The drum, *adinkra* and kente cloths, and other traditional forms make manifest the aesthetic qualities of oral and non-verbal art. However, it is yet to be established whether these traditional forms can be considered as literature.

Compared to the drum and *adinkra*, certain types of oral literature, (praise song, work songs, dirges, folktales, etc.) are more readily accepted as forms of literature. But even oral literature has been neglected by educated classes. It is probable that oral literature has not been accorded its due recognition because of some misconceptions about its artistic value.

However, (as Finnegan and Ong have established) orality, much like writing, is amenable to fulfil various artistic functions: to embellish; to obscure; for ambiguity; for ordinary communication and for aesthetic effect. The oral artist uses formulaic expressions and other conventions of this type of literature. Thus proverbs, incantations, riddles, folktales, etc are expressed in a variety of oral discourses. The oral artist, like the writer, needs to learn complex techniques and skills in order to be successful.

Oral and written literature have much more in common than has been acknowledged. The two artistic systems are not totally exclusive of each other. There is a continuous interaction between oral and written forms as the two modes of artistic expression are frequently mixed.

Oral literature is a type of literature which is transmitted through oral mode and which is best expressed through performance within an appropriate socio-cultural context. The context of oral literature is its most unique feature and probably the element that most effectively separates it from written literature. Anyidoho considers this emphasis on "social context" as "the most important single development that has taken place in oral literature scholarship over the years".[8] He identifies three kinds of contexts: the immediate context of the performance, the context of the poetic tradition and the general socio-cultural context. B. W. Andrzejewski et al. (Literatures in African Languages, 1985) write: "oral literature exists in its normal, natural state when it is performed".[9] Osundare also states: "while [writing] can exist independently of performance, oral literature derives its life-blood from it".[10]

Oral literature depends on a "performer who formulates it in words on a specific occasion - there is no other way in which it can be realised as a literary product".[11] The performance can be influenced by a combination of factors such as subject, occasion and audience as well as the style and flavor of a given genre. The narrator's body language, facial expression and voice are important determinants of meaning. According to Finnegan,

> When one misses the interplay of ear and eye, of audience and performer, which is an essential part of oral literature, it is hard for it not to seem pale and uninteresting. The vivacity is lost: the tone of voice, the sing song of the chants, and the gestures and mimicry which gives emphasis to what is being said and sometimes a good part of its meaning.[12]

A combination of these contextual and structural features determines the meaning of an oral narrative. The transmission of an oral tale is influenced by "context", and by the performer's virtuousity and ingenuity.

As an artistic product, oral literature poses challenges and unique problems which have bearing on the usual principles by which literature is evaluated. The major question is which version of this variable artistic product should be the subject of review by critics and scholars. A transcription of an oral performance is only a literary expression of a variant of the original work. Moreover, the rendering of an oral performance in written form is but a pale copy of the former. The written text is not a sufficient representation of the actual oral performance. It is not a full realisation of the oral tradition.

These "existential" difficulties of oral literature can affect how this literature is perceived. If the crucial aspects of a particular literature cannot be adequately represented, how can its significance be ascertained? Also, it may be possible that the version of oral literature available may not be authentic. As a matter of fact, Nketia and Anyidoho, who have tried to represent oral literature in written forms, have always added a disclaimer that their written versions are incomplete. Writing about the structures of oral and written poetry with reference to the Ewe Hiakotu poetic tradition, Anyidoho notes:

> Any text-oriented study of Ewe oral poetry is likely to lead to certain wrong conclusions about the composition and performance of this poetry. This is a tradition in which words alone are not enough to carry the burden of poetry. The text-oriented scholar may give exclusive prominence to structure and meaning of song texts. But he must be reminded that whatever "meaning" he finds is only potential: it requires validation within the social and artistic framework of the event.[13]

It is impossible for any script to capture all the embellishments and nuances of the oral performance. It is impossible to register in writing the full impact of a performance. Not even the use of explanatory notes and commentaries can eliminate the lapses that occur in the transition from orality to writing.

Transposition from oral to written modes misses the song, drumming, clapping and speech nuances which constitute the totality of an oral performance. The difficulty of rendering oral forms into writing increases when there is also the need for translation. In such an instance, there would be a "double shift from oral to written (transposition)"[14] and from one language to another.

But these challenges should not be the cause for undervaluing oral literature. The problem of classification does not undermine the centrality of this literature in a literary history. The search for proper methodologies to evaluate oral literature is still on. In his essay, "The Present State of African Oral Literature Studies," Anyidoho gives a synopsis of recent exciting developments in African oral literature. According to him there are calls by Ngugi and Chinweizu for the adoption of the term "orature" instead of "oral literature". Kwesi Yankah suggests the word "aural literature" instead of "oral literature" since the former term highlights the auditory quality.

The growing interest of scholars in oral literature can be measured by the increasing numbers of publications on this subject. Major publications on African oral literature include Kwabena Nketia's Funeral Dirges of the Akan People, Awoonor's Guardians of the Sacred Word: Ewe Poetry, Isidore Okpewho's The Epic in Africa, and Dorson's African Folklore. Also, there have been many conferences and colloquia on African oral literature. These studies have done much to highlight the importance of oral literature.

It appears that in general scholars of African literature are beginning to consider oral literature. Anyidoho concludes his essay, "The Present State of African Oral Literature Studies" with the following:

> Hopefully, our senses may not remain closed for long to the many developments that have taken place and will take place in oral literature studies. After all, writers in Africa are a minority breed. The mainstream of Africa's creative imagination has always flowed through our various traditions of oral literature.[15]

Today, oral literature is still vibrant and popular. It is a legitimate and vital part of literary systems in Africa.

Language By Language Survey of Written Ghanaian Literature

Arabic and "Ajami"

Although it is perhaps the earliest form of writing in Ghana, Islamic writing has received limited attention from literary scholars and historians. Colonial officers tended to be the first to write about this literary tradition. Even though a few Africanists, such as R.S. Rattray (1934) and Jack Goody (1954), studied aspects of the Islamic literary tradition in Ghana in the pre-Independence period, to date most critics fail to consider Hausa and ajami as a significant part of the Ghanaian literary system. Evidence about the literacy activities of Moslems can be found in a report written in the early decades of the nineteenth century by a British colonial officer, T.E. Bowdich, who stated in his report, Mission from Cape Coast to Ashantee (London, 1819), that Asante rulers employed educated Moslem officials to keep records of political events.

Another colonial official, Withers Gill published English translations of two Hausa works by Malam al-Hasan in his book The Moshi Tribe - A Short History (Accra: Government Printer, 1924). J. Duncan Johnstone, also an administrator in the colonial service, organized the recording of an Arabic chronicle, "Isnad al-Shuyukh wa'l-ulama" around 1930. An English translation of this work was later published in Jack Goody's The Ethnography of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, West of the White Volta (1954). In his contribution to Essays Presented to C.G. Seligman (1934), R.S. Rattray also analysed the works of al-Hajj Umar ibn Abi Bakr Uthman al-Kabbawi al-Kanawi al-Salghawi of Kete Krachi (1850-1934), under the title, "Hausa Poetry".

Since the 1960's, there has been some interest in Islamic literature, especially after the discovery of several unpublished manuscripts by al-Hajj Umar in Kintampo. The Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, which became the custodian of the collection, appointed one al-Hajj Osmanu Eshaka Bayo of Kintampo as a senior research officer charged with the responsibility of identifying and classifying Umar's Arabic and Hausa poetry.

Contemporary scholars of Islamic writing in Ghana, namely Obiechina, Gérard, Thomas Hodgkins and others, have attempted to reconstruct the history of Islamic writing in Ghana. Obiechina supports the view that Muslim writing in West Africa is antecedent to the coming of the Europeans. He notes that by the eighteenth century, Arabic had become a major medium for writing throughout the savannah region of West Africa, including Northern Ghana. This point is supported by Gérard:

> Already, in the eighteenth century writing in Arabic was common among Gonja Muslims for correspondence, private and commercial, and for recording genealogies. A significant section of this production was composed of magical treatises, one of which at least is known to have been written by a Fulani scholar from Katsina, Muhammed b. Muhammad al-Fulani al-Kashinawi, and became popular in East Africa after being printed in Cairo.[16]

According to this critic there were also notable contributions to Islamic writing in the eighteenth century by Al-Hajji Muhammad b. Mustapha, who compiled a chronicle of the Kingdom of Gonja beginnning with 1710.

Gérard also distinguishes some of the main characteristics of the Islamic literary tradition in Ghana. He maintains that Islamic writing is in two forms: Arabic and ajami, "that is, using the Arabic alphabet for Hausa (or other non-Arabic languages)" (xii). The Islamic writers, whether they wrote in Arabic or ajami, were educated in Islamic practises and saw literature as a medium to project Islamic values.

Hodgkin testifies to the fact that by the end of the nineteenth century, a literary tradition had developed around Northern Ghana towns like Kintampo, Wa, Salaga and Kete Krachi. He gives examples of types of Arabic/Hausa writing in Ghana: "Ta'srikh ahl Wala" (a history of the rulers of Wa), a chronicle written in Hausa and Arabic in 1922. A second form is praise poetry or shir. An example is the poetry of Shaik Umar Bamma (Ramadan A.H. 1279, February 2, 1863) in praise of the prophet. According to Hodgkin, Umar Bamm used "a double rhyme-scheme, based on all the letters of the Arabic alphabet".[17] A third example of Islamic writing in Ghana is manifested in the works of al-Hajj Salih ibn Muhammed who wrote a poem explaining Arabic archaic words and Malam al-Hasan who wrote a narrative poem about the Sudanese empires.

By far the most important Ghanaian Islamic writer is al-Hajj Umar. He was educated in Kano, Northern Nigeria and returned to Northern Ghana to head Islamic centres in Salaga, Kintampo and Kete Krachi. Umar's writing career spanned from 1877 to the 1930's and was known all over the Moslem world, but for a long time was unknown to most Africanists. In recent years, however, a few critics of

African literature have shown much appreciation for Umar's achievement. Hodgkin states that Umar composed as many as 1200 poems, most of them in Arabic, but some in Hausa. Gerard also describes Umar as a prolific author who wrote about Islam doctrines, anti-Christian and anti-colonial movements, health and history, among other things.

Al-Hajj Umar's early work "Kitaab al-Sarhat al-Wariqa fiilm al-Wathiqa" ("A Book of the Blooming Flower") was published in Cairo. Another work, "Tarbi al-zuhd wa Iwasiya" (Tarbi Poem on Absentism) was published posthumously in Cairo in the collection Al-qasa'id al-ashariyat (1947/48). Umar expressed his concern about the decline of morality and religion and also gave an account of the civil war in Salaga in "Tal al-munafa' afi dhikr al-munaza' a" (1892) a poem of 248 verses.

Umar left Salaga and settled in Kete Krachi, and continued with his writing. "Mashra ma al-khabar li-warid washra bi l-nazar" (1901) is, for example, a protest poem against the interference of the Christian missionaries in Ghana. Umar's famous poem, "Tunkuyawa" (1918) is about the spread of influenza. He also wrote a panegyric, "Suad Aw Asma Aw dadow Hausa" (1918), in praise of the people of Yendi.

There is no doubt that Umar is a major Ghanaian writer. Hodgkin refers to him as the most interesting and historically significant of the Ghanaian Islamic poets. Gérard echoes Hodgkin's views that Umar's contributions "might be described as making poetry the vehicle of social commentary, social criticism and reflections on the history of his time" (40). He agrees with the "specialists [who] have come to the conclusion that Umar should rank 'as one of the major literary figures in West Africa'" (40).

So far, the interest in Islamic learning has centred on Umar and a few of his colleagues. Literary scholars are aware of how difficult it is to reconstruct the history of Ghanaian literature in local languages. Nevertheless, they are very appreciative of the vitality of the segments available to them.

English

The earliest writings about Ghana in western languages were by Europeans who viewed their subject from a distance. Mrs. Ahpra Behn's Oronoko (1688) falls into this group. Oronoko, the hero, is said to be a Ghanaian prince who was captured in his homeland and enslaved. Behn cultivates the myth of the black person as a 'noble savage', one who is endowed with primal elements and natural virtues.

As a reflection of the general impact of slavery which intensified during the seventeenth century, there were increasingly negative images about black persons in western fiction. European intellectuals, religious bodies, merchants and rulers actively defended the human cartel and there was virtually no remonstration about subjecting Africans to the most brutal treatment. Slavery dehumanized the African; the only other image westerners had of the African, which was not any more elevating, was from the portrait of the African in "natural" state by writers like Shakespeare (Othello) and Aphra Behn (Oronoko).

However, in the eighteenth century a small but active movement began campaigning to abolish slavery and to improve the educational and social conditions of ex-slaves. This group welcomed and encouraged literate ex-slaves to write about their experiences. Early Ghanaian writing in European languages began in the wake of these social and political movements. The literary works of Ignatius Sancho, Ottobah Cugoano and their colleague, Anton Wilhein Amo, who studied and taught in Germany, were in furtherance of anti-slavery campaigns.

Amo and others sought through their writings to undermine slavery and myths about the African. Amo's De Jure Maurorum in Europa (1729) is an indictment of the slave trade, arguing a case for the freedom of the African from enslavement according to patents issued by the Roman Emperor Justinian. De Jure is a thesis vindicating the humanity and intellectual capacity of the African.

Sancho (Letters of The Late Ignatius Sancho, 1782) is subtle in his approach, appealing to the sense of decency among westerners and calling for humanitarianism and freedom for African slaves. In Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil of Slavery (1787) Cugoano captures in scene after scene the misery of the captured slaves and the cruelty of the slave masters. He himself, like Sancho, was captured in Ghana and transported to the West Indies where he was an eye-witness to the savage treatment of African slaves. In Thoughts, he is most passionate and direct in censoring Christian traditions and western parliaments for failing to live by their true principles and for encouraging the activities of the merchants, planters, buccaneers and slave traders. He refutes all aspersions about black inferiority and protests against colonization and the missionaries who were really torch bearers for the colonizers of Africa.

Having been composed in metropolises, the critical reception of the writings of these former African slaves came first in Europe where their impact was to galvanize social activists in their challenge of the slavery system. To date no records have been found indicating whether these early works were read by Ghanaians in the nineteenth or the early decades of the twentieth centuries. However, there is evidence that since the 1970's these works have been included in studies of Ghanaian/African literature. In "Ghana's Written Literature" (1972), Janheinz Jahn ascribed to Amo and others the distinction of being the earliest Ghanaian writers in Western languages. Jahn's position is confirmed by Gérard ("Toward a National History of Ghanaian Literature," 1980), Emmanuel Obiechina ("Africa's Lost Generation," 1981) and Keith Sandiford's Measuring The Moment (1981). Sandiford best sums up the significance of the early African expatriate writers:

> Their importance as precursors in the literary tradition that has addressed itself to ontological and existential issues definitive of subsequent Black authorship is this: they set the agenda of values for such authorship that has shaped permanently the meaning of literacy and the profession of letters in postcolonial and still-colonized Black societies.[18]

These links define Ghanaian writing, giving it continuity. Cugoano, Sancho and Amo represent the early beginnings of nationalism and Pan-Africanism, a tradition that dates back over two hundred years.

While Ghanaian writing in the eighteenth century was ascribed to expatriates in Europe, the literary works of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were produced by indigenous Ghanaians, missionaries and colonial officers in Ghana. Gérard, Obiechina and Lalage Bown are the leading scholars who have written about Ghanaian writing of this period. They describe these writings as consisting of journalistic, religious, polemical, didactic, cultural and travel matter.

Prose writing continued into the twentieth century and became increasingly important for the nationalist movement. In "Perspectives on African Prose-Writing in English" (1971) Bown discusses three examples of early Ghanaian prose. The first type comprises letters, diaries and biographical materials. Examples are Alex Quainson-Sackey's Africa Unbound: Reflections on an African Statesman and S.R.B. Attoh-Ahumah's Memoirs of West African Celebrities (1905).

The second type can be labelled reporting. Ghanaians in the colonial service often wrote reports about specific tasks. For example, George Ekem Ferguson's Report of a Mission to the Interior (1892) is an account of his trip to Northern Ghana to establish the northern boundary. Ferguson described the customs and cultural practices in Northern Ghana. The third kind of prose is professional writing including legal tracts and political speeches. According to Bown, J.E. Casely-Hayford's Gold Coast Native Institutions (1903) and Nkrumah's I Speak of Freedom: A Statement of African Ideology (1961) and Africans Must Unite (1963) advocate pride in national culture and explore the issues of nationalism and Pan-Africanism.

Any lingering doubts literary scholars and historians have concerning the literariness of early Ghanaian writing seem to disappear once the focus is put on the twentieth century. Different sets of questions have been raised in relation to writing in the first half of the twentieth century. J.B. Danquah, O.R. Dathorne, Nnabuenyi Ugonna, Richard Priebe and others have discussed the elements of narrative, characterization, style, plot, etc. in J.E. Casely-Hayford's Ethiopia Unbound and Obeng's Eighteenpence. There is general agreement among critics that these two works constitute the roots of Ghanaian/West African imaginative writing.

I have noted in Chapter Two that the recent discovery of the manuscript of Kobina Sekyi's The Blinkards which was purported to have been written in 1915 (it was published in 1974), has generated considerable excitement about early Ghanaian literature. Ayo Langley, who wrote the introduction to the 1974 edition of the Blinkards, and Asiedu Yerenkyi ("Founding Father of the Ghanaian Theatre," 1977) are leaders in the efforts to establish Sekyi's place as a major Ghanaian dramatist.

A survey of literary histories shows that the period between the two World Wars was dominated by writing in local languages; this subject will be discussed later on in this chapter. During the aftermath of World War Two and the Independence period two major strands of Ghanaian writing in English emerged: popular literature, which developed in the urban centres, and the writings of Ghanaian intellectuals, many of whom, like Michael Dei-Anang and R.E.G. Armattoe, were government officials. Ime Ikiddeh ("The Character of Popular Fiction in Ghana," 1969) and Priebe ("Popular Writing in Ghana: A Sociology and Rhetoric," 1979) state that the period from post World War Two to the early 1960's was marked by the proliferation of what has become known as popular literature or 'trivial' literature. In their comments on this type of literature, these critics emphasise its sociological and economic aspects.

The pace for popular literature was set by Benibengor Blay, who was a publisher and distributor of his own work. This arrangement became the prototype for other writer-entrepreneurs, such as E.K. Mickison and Asare Konadu. On the strength of sheer quantity alone, trivial literature is indeed popular. Priebe estimates that Blay's Emelia's Promise and Fulfilment, Konadu's Come Back Dora and Mickison's Who Killed Lucy sold over 40,000 copies each.

The popular novel is perhaps matched in its mass appeal by the so-called concert party, a syncretic dramatic form with its repertoire comprising drama, music, dance and mime acts. Critics such as Kwabena Bame, Kwesi Yankah and Alain Ricard, have defended its artistic and sociological significance.[19] However, much more attention needs to be given to the concert party, especially concerning the standards for its assessment.

The contributions of the poets Michael Dei-Anang and R.E.G. Armattoe to Ghanaian literature in the 1940's and 1950's have been noted. According to Daniel Izevbaye, who has written about the development of poetry in Ghana,

> Poetry writing has a special historical importance in Ghana because Ghanaian writers have been more associated than any West Africans with the beginning of English language poetry in West Africa, and because poetry was an important genre in which Ghanaian writers before independence chose to express their response to the political issues of their time. The importance of race and politics in the poetry of this period not only reflects the main concerns of the day, but also accounts for the fact that in the works of Michael Dei-Anang (1909-1978) and R.E.G. Armattoe (1913-1953), the main poets of the time, political statement was of greater importance than any concern with originality of poetic language and form.[20]

Armattoe's first love was medicine for which he earned international recognition; he was a finalist for a Nobel Prize in this field in 1948. His poetry shows a man full of passion and love for Africa. In the opening page of Between the Forest and the Sea Armattoe declares: "The African has an inborn sense of rhythm, a tolerably good ear for music and a sense of colour and harmony".[21]

If Armattoe sounds very much like negritude poets, it is because he himself (like the Francophone African poets) was separated from traditional African culture. He was educated in Britain, Ireland and Switzerland. Nevertheless, Armattoe had a strong passion for Ghana, especially Eweland, whose cause he championed until his death.

Michael Dei-Anang has been promoted, especially in the 1950's and early 1960's, as a national poet, a description which is appriopriate since he dedicates his writing to fellow country people. For instance, he pays tribute to Ghana in In Wayword Lines from Africa.

> Awake, ye Gold Coast Sons
> And daughters of a reckless age!
> Awake and scan with me,
> From page to page,
> The pregnant paragraphs
> Of our country's past;
> For history is God's traffic light
> That beckons on the nations all,
> Or warns them to wait
> This appropriate movement of advance.[22]

Dei-Anang writes about the history of cocoa (Ghana's main cash earning crop) in Cocoa Comes to Mampong (1949), highlights the significance of the Asante traditional stool, in Okomfo Anokye's Golden Stool (1959) and celebrates the building of a hydro-electricity dam at Akosombo in another poem:

> Akosombo, Nkosonkonsombo,
> Symbol of a people's hopes and faith;
> Akosombo, Nkosonkonsombo,
> Chain of a host of cloistered hills,
> Refuge for brave Akwamu's fighting forces.[23]

The history of Ghanaian literature in the 1950's shows that many writers used the radio as an outlet for creative expression. In 1958 the Ministry of Information published a selection of literary contributions to the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (G.B.C.) in an anthology, Voices of Ghana to commemorate Ghana's independence. The contributions in Hausa, English, Akan, Ewe, Ga and Adangbe consist of a variety of subjects relating to urban and rural life, poetry of drums and proverbs. Voices is a bold attempt to feature Ghanaian literature in indigenous languages and in English.

In a paper which he presented at the 1988 International Conference on African Literature and the English Language held at the University of Calabar, Nigeria, Kofi Agovi declared that Voices inaugurated "a new literary movement".[24] illustrating "the desire to cultivate a national literature".[25] This publication also served as a platform for the "outdooring" of many young writers who, not long after, were to find and establish their own voices. The early works of Cameron Doudu, Kayper-Mensah and Amo Djoleto were featured in the Voices. Efua Sutherland's short story, "New Life at Kyerefaso," which she restructured in a dramatic form as Foriwa, was also published in Voices. Ghanaian Writing, a collection of literary works published in 1972 continued the objective of giving focus to diverse expressions of Ghanaian writing.

Ulli Beier and Janheinz Jahn argue that the spontaneity and enthusiasm generated by the publication of Voices was short lived. In the opinion of these critics, the decade after the publication of this anthology was marked by a dearth of creative literature in Ghana. Beier contends that during the first ten years of its independence Ghana was not able to produce any creative works remotely resembling the literary achievements of Nigeria during the same period. Jahn goes even further to blame Nkrumah for the apparent lack of creative literature in Ghana: "Not a single novel appeared in the course of the 14 years that Kwame Nkrumah was in power".[26]

Compelling historical and bibliographical evidence undermines Beier's and Jahn's position. Contrary to their view, the production of literature during the period in question was tremendous. Nkrumah provided the prerequisite for the development of Ghanaian literature by establishing publishing companies and by supporting individual artistic ventures. The Bureau of Ghana Languages, Waterville Publishing House, Ghana Publishing Corporation, etc. sponsored many creative works of Ghanaian literature in the 1960's. The following are a sampling of the literary works published during the so-called desert phase of Ghana literature: Joe de Graft's Sons and Daughters (performed in 1963 and published in 1964); Kofi Awoonor's Rediscovery and Other Poems (published by Mbari of Nigeria in 1964) and Ama Ata Aidoo's Dilemma of a Ghost (1965). Also there were numerous publications in local languages: Sam Addo Baidoo's Awregyae ho asem (published in 1965 by the Presbyterian Press); F. Dankwa's Fa adwene: Novel in Twi (published in Accra by the Presbyterian Press); E.T. Adiku and E.G. Adom's Nufiame -nutinyayo (published by the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in 1965 and McNeil Dzen Fiakpamo gbi (published by the Persbyterian Church in 1965), Kobina Parks's Song of the Wilderness (1965) and Saka Acquaye's Obadzeng Goes to Town (1965).

It seems that Beier and Jahn, as well as most native Ghanaians themselves, consumed many of the vicious distortions and untruths about Nkrumah, propaganda which was widespread especially during the decade immediately following his overthrow by the army and police. Now, twenty-three years after the event, most Ghanaians are highly appreciative of Nkrumah's achievements. He promoted the development of Ghanaian writing through his mass literacy and educational programs. These projects helped prepare the ground for the flourishing of modern Ghanaian literature. This discussion will be taken up in Chapter Four of the thesis.

It is probable that the leadership provided by Nkrumah spurred the production of literature in the mid-1960's. The literary works published during this period include Joseph Abruquah's The Catechist (1965) and The Torrent (1968), Francis Selormey's The Narrow Path (1966), Amu Djoleto's The Strange Man (1967) and Cameron Doudu's The Gab Boys. However, Senanu downgrades these novels as inconsequential and poor: "pedestrian second-rate novels".[27] In contrast, Priebe appreciates them as novels of personal development, literary works written in the fashion of the Bildungsroman.

The momentum generated during the Nkrumah era was sustained and increased throughout the sixties, the seventies and the eighties. New and powerful voices announced their presence on the Ghanaian literary scene: Ayi Kwei Armah, Kofi Awoonor, Efua Sutherland, Ama Ata Aidoo Atu Kwei Okai, and Joe de Graft. Sutherland almost single-handedly led the movement for the establishment of a national drama studio and also set the pace in children's theatre. Playtime in Africa, Edufa, The Marriage of Anansewa and Vulture Vulture are some of her brilliant contributions to Ghanaian literature. Aidoo's The Dilemma of a Ghost and Anowa won high critical appraisal. Joe de Graft has also been praised for his excellent dramatic works Jazz and Brass (1975) and Visitor From The Past (1970) which was first performed in 1962 under the title "Through a Film Darkly."

Since the mid-1970's the increase in volume and improvement in quality of Ghanaian writing have made it possible to undertake a proper generic classification of Ghanaian literature. Accordingly, many of the writers have specialised in one genre or another. For example, Kofi Awoonor and Atu Kwei Okai have achieved distinction as major Ghanaian poets. Ama Ata Aidoo and Efua Sutherland have been recognised as major dramatists and Armah has emerged, thus far, as the foremost Ghanaian novelist. Kofi Awoonor answered those critics who maintained that his collection of poetry, Rediscovery, was a plagiarism by churning out other excellent collections of original poetry, Night of my Blood and Ride Me Memory, which are based on the Ewe elegiac tradition. The strength of Awoonor's poetic voice became apparent to most critics when he took on the project of transcribing and translating the songs of Akpalu and other Ewe songsters or henowo. Guardians of the Sacred Word (1974) illustrates the distance between a transcribed-and-translated version of the Ewe traditional song of Abuse and Awoonor's own poetry. Awoonor's Rediscovery, Night of My Blood, Ride Me Memory, The House by the Sea as well as the recent addition, Until the Morning After are the works of a poet who has won international recognition.

The entry of Atukwei Okai brought much excitement to the Ghanaian poetic scene. As Kofi Anyidoho points out, Okai announced "his arrival upon the poetic scene of Africa"[28] with drama, pomp, style, and music:

> I, Oshamraku Atukwei, standing
> before your shrine declare
> myself by appointment the
> organ-grinder to God and Man.[29]

Okai's poetic vision is formed by the integration of written and oral elements. In his poetry there are competing voices, "each striving too loud to be heard above others".[30] Yet what emerges is a harmonization, a state that is fully attained during performance. For Okai, each performance is an event, full of a charged electrifying moment. Anyidoho credits Okai for returning Ghanaian poetry to the oral medium.

In the 1980's, Kofi Anyidoho and Kobina Eyi Acquah distinguished themselves as leading Ghanaian poets. Acquah's The Man Who Died 1974-79 (1984) won the 1985 British Airways Prize for poetry. The same collection received an honorable citation for the Noma Award for publishing in Africa. Anyidoho's poetry is a skillful weaving of the threads of halo, the Ewe song of Abuse, into a rich panoply of poetic patterns. The essential ingredients of halo, the elements of satire, the tone of detached self-mockery and the pretense to anger constitute the repository of much of Anyidoho's poetry.

Dramatic works such as Anowa by Aidoo and The Marriage of Anasewa by Sutherland are restructurings of traditional folktales. Aidoo's Dilemma of A Ghost explores the theme of an African-American's experience of African culture. Sutherland has written many plays (Play Time in Africa and Vulture Vulture) for children.

In Ghana, Armah brought the novel to its highest level so far. Critics, such as Richard Priebe, Daniel Stewart, Daniel Izevbaye and Kofi Agovi, recognize Armah's superior talent and skill in this art. The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born, Fragments and Two Thousand Seasons have been judged to be outstanding. In 1984, Priebe wrote that the only other Ghanaian novel to approach the stature of Armah's novels is Kofi Awoonor's This Earth, My Brother. He recognizes these two authors' right to national and international acclaim.

The Beautyful Ones, Fragments and This Earth, My Brother are some of the most powerful creative expressions of the mood of angst, cynicism and disenchantment with the post-independence era. These themes are also dominant in Cameron Doudu's The Gab Boys and Ama Ata Aidoo's No Sweetness Here. Priebe points out that the mood of anger, pessimism and political malaise pervade even the popular novelettes as well as the Bildungsroman.

> The [modern] Ghanaian novel is informed by a deep sense of gravitas, of the serious commitment to the welfare of the polis, the people of the state. The early "literary" writers, as well as the authors of the less ambiguously popular novelettes and elite novels, all explore or provide answers to the problems that interfere with the welfare of the poli. The central answer to the "literary" novel is education, either of the formal kind as gained by the protagonist of the Torrent and The Narrow Path, or the informal education by which the protagonist of The Gab Boys and Come Back Dora learn about their culture. In popular literature, the answer is to be found in the allegiance to a strict code of personal morality. In the elite literature more questions are raised than answers given, but the authors persist in examining the need for political as well as cultural vision.[31]

Priebe's diagnosis is representative of the views of most literary scholars and historians of modern Ghanaian literature. The cause for the malaise, which is a combination of political, social, and economic factors will be discussed in Chapter Four. For now, I wish to underscore Priebe's observation that many contemporary Ghanaian writers express their frustration with the post-independence era in literary forms. Their disquiet and discontent have been translated into a number well written literary works.

Because it so far appears to be the most significant phase of the Ghanaian literary system, modern Ghanaian literature in English has received the most critical attention. As the quality and quantity of modern Ghanaian literature in English has increased, so has the contributions of the literary scholars and historians. Perhaps this development also has taken place because the modern phase, about which much information is available, is a relatively easy field of study for literary scholars and historians, many of whom lack the linguistic and intellectual training to deal with other aspects of Ghanaian literature.

Akan: Akwapim

Writing in Akan began initially in the Akwapim area and later developed in Cape Coast and Kumasi and spread to other Twi speaking areas. Historians, J.B. Webster and A.A.

Boahene (The Revolutionary Years: West Africa Since 1800) state that by the mid-nineteenth century, members of the Basler Evangelische Missionsgesellschaft, who introduced literacy in the Akwapim ridge, had moved inland and established a school and a cathechist training college at Akropong. Swiss missionaries, unlike their British Wesleyan counterparts, were committed to instructing Ghanaians to read the Bible in local languages. The Basel missionary and educational program at Akwapim was launched by an indefatigable teacher, J.G. Christaller. His achievements include translating the Akan version of the Bible (printed in 1870/71) and writing an Akan grammar, A Grammar and An Akan Dictionary in 1811. Noel Smith, a historian of church activities in Ghana, claims that Christaller "raised the Twi language to a literary level and provided the basis of all later work in [this] language".[32]

The literacy activities of the Basel mission in Akwapim yielded many positive results. One of the early consequences was that it prepared Ghanaians to write in local languages. A graduate of the Basel mission, Rev. David Asante was one of the first Ghanaians to write in Akan. He translated Bunyan's The Pilgrim's Progress into Akan in 1883.

After the First World War, the Germans were expelled from Ghana and their missions were taken over by other church groups. In Akropong, the Presbyterian missionaries of the United Free Church of Scotland took over from the Basel group and continued the literacy programs. The early decades of the twentieth century witnessed the development of the literary careers of two Akan writers, Rev. C.A. Akrofi and J.J. Addaye, who was a clerk and a veteran soldier. These early writers wrote books of Akan Grammar, religion and oral tradition. Addaye's Bere adu (The Hour Has Struck), a collection of twenty-five short stories was published in 1913. He also collaborated with Akrofi to edit several works in Akan.

The full details of Addae's literary career are still unknown. Vladimir Klima, Karel Frantisek Ruzick and Petr Zima speculate that

> One cannot exclude the possibility that Addaye may have produced further prose works, whose manuscripts have disappeared, but which may have influenced other Twi authors.[33]

These critics hopes that

> Future Ghanaian literary criticism will one day clarify not only the particular details of Addaye's life .... but will also throw light on the nature and duration of Akrofi's corporation in editing Addaye's books.[34]

There is evidence of the contributions of Akrofi whose publications include Twi Kasa Mmara (a Twi grammar book, 1937), Twi Spelling Book (1938) and Twi Mmebusem: Twi Proverbs; with English Translations and Comments (1958). Akrofi and Addaye co-edited a collection of short stories, Mmedenbo bu Mmusu abasa so (Perserverance Overcomes Difficulties, 1948). Akrofi's contribution to Akwapim Twi writing is substantial. Gérard states that "after

Christaller, no one did more than Akrofi for the serious study of the Twi language and lore" (269). In an obituary notice, Kofi Asare Opoku praises Akrofi for his literary works in Twi, an achievement that is exemplary in view of the commonly held assumption that "the road to recognition as a scholar lay in the ability with which one was able to handle European languages".[35]

In the 1940's, another distinguished alumnus of the Basel mission school, Joseph Boakye Danquah, published a dramatic work in Akwapim Twi, Nyankonsem (Fables of the Celestial, 1941). He also wrote a play in English, The Third Woman (1943). After obtaining a Ph.D at the University of London Danquah returned to the Gold Coast to lead the nationalist movement. In the 1950's he lost in a bid for political leadership to his former protege, Kwame Nkrumah.

Other Akwapim writers who have made important contributions to Twi literature include E.J. Osew, Koranteng Owusu and V.A. Amarteifio. This generation of Akan writers concentrated on creative writing. Osew wrote historical plays about the Akan rulers: Nana Agyeman hwe hwe (The Search for Nana Agyeman, 1935) and Asantehene Osei Tutu. Owusu relied heavily on the local oral lore; his dramatic work, Mpuaasa Ntiamoa (A Man With Three Tufts of Hair, 1950), is based on the folktale of a devil who turned himself into an irresistible, charming suitor in order to win the hand of an attractive maiden. A.A. Opoku's poetic skills were recognised when some of his poems were published in Voices. The English version of Armateifio's original Akan novel, Bediako (1962), appeared under a new title, African Adventurer in 1965.

Akan: Fante

Western education in Ghana began in the Fante coastal areas of Cape Coast and Elmina. The Wesleyan Missionaries who have operated in this coastal region since the late eighteenth century were primarily interested in the propagation of the English language. This policy was embraced by the merchant class and the privileged sons of the chiefs and rich people whose main interest was in maintaining economic and cultural links with English administrators and traders who had settled along the coast. According to Noel Smith, the merchants

> preferred the Wesleyan schools because of their emphasis on the English language in contrast with the emphasis on the vernacular in the Basel mission schools.[36]

In view of the educational programs of the Wesleyans, literacy and literary activities in Fante began later than in Akwapim Twi, though formal education in Ghana started in the Fante region. Significant writing in Fante began to appear only in this century.

One of the most distinguished Fante writers is Gaddiel Robert Acquaah who began his literary activities in the 1920's by translating church literature into Fante. He also paid tribute to the Wesleyan denomination in J.W. Welsley Methodist asor ne far baa (J.W. Welsley, The Founder of Methodism, 1938). Acquaah produced many works about Fante folklore and published an English translation of Fante Classical Poems in 1920. Other works by Acquaah are Ababaawa na atwer (The Maid and the Toad, 1932), Mfantse amambra (Fante Customs, 1947) and Akyekyewere (Songs of Comfort, n.d.). Acquaah's literary works, Mbebusem Nkyerekyeremu (Proverbs Explained, 1934) and Mfantse ebirempon (The Fante Chief, 1955) are based on the Fante tradition. Acquaah had genuine love for Fante and was an inspiration for other Fante writers such as J.A. Annobil, Daniel Abbiw, S.K. Otto, Kobena Gyate Akwa, and Efua Sutherland.

Annobil trained at the school of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London and returned home to manage the Methodist Book Deport at Cape Coast. Abbiw's Fante translation of twenty-three short stories by Leo Tolstoy was published under the title Kodzi eduonu ebiasa in 1961. Otto wrote a collection of short stories, Nworaba na apoko (1963), most of which deal with the subjects of fishing and the life of a fisherman. Akwa wrote many short stories and plays for the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation under the pseudonym Joseph Ghartey. His most successful literary work, Twer Nyame (The Flower-Basket), was published in 1969. Two of Akwa's plays were published posthumously by the Bureau of Ghana Languages under the title, Aso awar nye ni in 1971. Though she is known for her excellent dramatic works in English, Efua Sutherland has also written in Fante. In 1967, she wrote Obaatan Kesewa, a short story.

Akan: Asante

Christian missionary activities in the Asante region began much later than in the Central, Eastern, Accra or Volta regions. Because of its location far away from the coast this region was not easily accessible to the early European missionaries. Moreover, the Asante empire itself was powerful enough to resist European incursions into the interior. Thus it was well into the twentieth century before the missionaries were able to establish a base in Kumasi, the Asante capital. By then, Akwapim Twi had been developed as a literary language.

For a time there was controversy regarding the Akan dialect which should be selected for general use. The Asante people were politically more powerful than the Akwapims. However, Akwapim Twi had already developed as a literary language. The Vernacular Literature Bureau (VLB) forestalled future complications about the status of Akan Akwapim and Asanti by recognising both dialects; the VLB publishes texts in both Akan dialects.

Asante writers aspired to achieve in their dialect what their counterparts had achieved in Akwapim Twi. One of the first to write in Asante Twi was J.H. Nketia, a musicologist of international repute. Gérard refers to him as "the founder of Asante Twi literature" (271), and praises his achievement in creative arts:

> [Nketia's] first story, Semode ("Pleasant news", 1936) followed by a collection of folktales, Akanfo anansesem nghoma (1949), a play, Ananwoma (1951), a short story, Kwabena Amoa (1952) and a collection of poems, Anwosen:1944-49 (1952), can be said to have laid the foundation of Asante-Twi literature, which developed with great rapidity, while Nketia devoted more and more of his attention to the scholarly study of traditional oral art and music, not from a narrowly Asante angle, but as samples of the wider Akan culture. (African Language Literatures, 271)

Other writers who have made important contributions to Asante Twi literature are Robert Asare Tabi and Andrews Christian Denteh. Tabi wrote a biography, Ohene Khama, in 1949. Also, like Abbiw (who translated Tolstoy's short stories into Fante), Tabi produced an Asante Twi version of an English translation of some of Tolstoy's short stories (Ayesem Mmiensa, 1952). Later he wrote Aka M'ani (I Would Just Watch), a dramatic work censoring achoholism and other deviant behaviour. Some of Tabi's works published posthumously by the Bureau of Ghana Languages (Formerly the Vernacular Literature Bureau) include Me nko me yam (My Own Stomach Only, 1960), a dramatization of an "ananse" tale and Ohia nhye da (Poverty Comes Unexpectedly, 1962), a historical novel about the introduction of cocoa into Ghana. Dei-Anang (1949) explores the same subject in his poetry.

Denteh makes use of oral lore in his writing; his Agyaa Ananse (1964) is based on an Ananse tale. His book, Akwasi

Mahuw (1964), is a history of the Asantes in the eighteenth century. Denteh also launched a cultural magazine in Twi, Odawuru, in 1968.

The trend toward producing books on folk customs began to change from the mid-1960's:

> Most writers of Asante-Twi who emerged during the 1950's and early 1960's proved to be interested exclusively in the recording of oral lore, especially tales and proverbs, but a turning point seemed to occur around 1965: a new form of prose fiction began to gain the upper hand with the publication of a half dozen so-called novels which were really short stories extended to 30-60 pages. (African Language Literatures, 272)

It seems the change of pace was anticipated by Joseph Oduru whose Seantee: A Novel in Asante-Twi (1958) was written in the style of novelettes of the mid-1960's. The authors who made their mark with the novelette in the 1960's include: Michael Boateng Amanfo with Se ebewie (How Will It End? 1964) and Mehunie a anka ("Had I Known is Always Too Late," 1967), and E.M. Opong with Kwabena Gyam (1967).

There were contributions in other genres by Twi authors. Kwabu Adom-Ampofo wrote two plays which were published under the title So mu yei (1967). Joseph Bratuo's poetry, Asetena mu Awosem (Poems of Everyday Life), appeared with an English translation in 1964.

Nzema

The impetus given to writing in local languages continued after independence. Under Nkrumah's government, the Bureau of Ghana Languages (BGL, formerly the Vernacular Literature Bureau) expanded its program of promoting writing in local languages. In addition to publications in Akan, Ewe, Ga and Hausa, the BGL also produced works in minor and minority Ghanaian languages like Nzema and Adangbe. Arthur Lolara Mensah's short stories, Bedie Me Nwora Koo (Listen To My Story, 1953) and Egya Awienze (Mr. Awienze, 1954) are among the earliest fictional writings in Nzema. In 1967, Francis Couloo Ainooson published Nyanza anoma (The Nyaza Bird).

Ga

The population of the native Ga people is probably less than a million, although the language is spoken by a far greater number of persons. Ga, which is the indigenous language spoken in Accra, the capital of Ghana, has acquired political and economic significance, a status it enjoyed from the time the Danish traders settled on the coast of Accra.

By the mid-nineteenth century, the Basel mission had launched its educational and evangelical activities in the coastal town of Accra. J. Zimmerman, Christaller's counterpart, promoted the use of Ga as the medium of instruction, even though his effort was impeded by the

Danish administration who saw no use in developing literacy in local languages.

The Basel mission had modest success with its educational

programs. Zimmerman himself wrote A Grammatical Sketch of The Ga or Accra Language which was published in Stuttgart in 1858. However, many of the early local scholars elected to write in English. One of the most distinguished, Rev. Carl Christian Reindorf wrote the History of the Gold Coast and Asante, which was published at the headquarters of the Basel mission in Switzerland. In a prefatory remark about this publication he declares,

> the sole object of this publication [History of the Gold Coast] is, to call the attention of all you readers and countrymen, to the study and collection of our history, and to create a basis for a future more complete history of the Gold Coast.[37]

Another early Ga scholar, A.B. Papafio wrote about the life and customs of the Ga people. His series of articles, "Native Tribunals of the Akras of the Gold Coast," "Law of Succession Among the Akras or the Ga Tribes Proper of the Gold Coast," and "Use of Names Among the Gas or the People of the Gold Coast" were published in African Affairs (Royal Africa Society) in 1913, 1911 and 1913 respectively.

Evidence so far leads to the conclusion that creative writing in Ga began much later than in Akwapim-Twi or Ewe. It is possible that future research may undermine this conclusion. It appears that Nicholas Akrong Odai's Gbomo Ke Wala (Man and LIfe, 1953) is one of the earliest creative works in Ga. This literary work is immensely popular among readers in Accra and Ga rural areas.

The early 1960's could be characterised as the active phase of Ga writing. E.A.W. Engmann's Ganyobi (The Ga Child) was published by B.G.L. in 1961. The Bureau also published E. Lante-Lawson's Gbotsu Mli Gbome (The Man in the Anthill, 1964) and Albert A. Amartey's play Otswa Te Otswa Ohienaa (You Have Signed Your Beard).

Adangbe

Publications in Adangbe, which belongs to the same language family as Ga, are listed under a separate heading in the Ghana National Bibliography (issued by the Ghana Library Board). Jawa Appronti of The Institute of African Studies, himself an Adangbe, supports this arrangement. Publications in Adangbe include Rudoph Philippe Djabanor's short stories, Nilemi He Sane Kome (Some Stories about Wisdom, 1953) and Mamle Dole (Mamle: The Beautiful Lady, 1967). John N. Nano also wrote Ebe He Kake (It's so Everywhere, 1967).

Ewe

Compared to other literatures in Ghanaian languages, Ewe literature has received much critical attention. This claim can be substantiated by reviewing statements made by scholars about the development and growth of Ewe literature in Ghana and by evaluating the contributions of the Norddeutsche Missionsgesellschaft (Bremen mission) and missionaries such as Bernard Schlegal and Diedrich Westerman as well as Ewe writers like I.K. Hoh and F.K. Fiawoo. Ewe literature in Ghana has also profited from the fact that Ewe is spoken Togo and the Benin Republic as well as Ghana.

As early as 1959, Ursula Hintze, a linguist declared that

> more books and articles had been written in and about the Ewe language than in and about Igbo or even Yoruba, even though Ewe is spoken by far fewer people than the other two languages.[38]

Paul Weigrabe, a German missionary, compiled a catalogue of selected writings in Ewe. His article "Neue Literatur in Ewe," was published in the journal Afrika und ubersee in 1960. Petr Zima wrote a brief literary history of Ewe, "Eweska Literatura" which appeared in the collection, Literatura Cerne Afriky in 1972. Contemporary literary scholars and historians who have written about Ewe literature include Albert Gérard, Alain Ricard, Simon Amegbleame and Kofi Awoonor. These scholars have explored the initial stages of Ewe writing and have examined the different routes of its development under the French and British colonial administrations.

Vladimir Klima, Karel Franisek Ruzick and Petr Zima (Black Africa, 1976) credit Bernard Schlegel, one of the early German missionaries, with laying

> ... the bases for the [development] of literacy in Ewe...he [Schlegel] must be considered one of the first pioneers of Ewe literacy, as well one of those who took a particular interest in analysing the structure of that language.[39]

Gérard also writes that "the foundation for Ewe writing was laid by Schlegel" (272). Schlegel's own publications are in folklore, language and religion. An example is "Schussel zur Ewe-Sprache, dargeboten in den gramatischen Grundzugen des Anlo Dialekts derselben mit Worter-sammlung nebst einer Sammlung von Sprichwortern und einigen Fabeln der Eingeborenen" (Key to the Ewe Language, Presented on the Grammatical Basis of the Anlo Dialect of this Same Language, together with a Collection of Proverbs and some Fables of the Aborigines, 1857). Schlegel's translation of selected biblical texts was published posthumously.

The Bremen mission's literacy program was expanded under Westerman who succeeded Schlegel and who spent his entire adult life teaching and ministering to the Ewe people. Westerman never slowed down despite the interference of the German colonial administrators who wanted to implement their own programs for introducing the German language in the schools. Nor did his dedication diminish even after the colonial administration changed hands after World War I. According to Klima et al.,

> the main importance of Westerman's work for Ewe literacy and literature is obviously not to be found in his various booklets in Ewe, but rather in his theoretical and applied

> research into the complex process of literarization and growing literacy in that language. Apart from producing a monumentary Ewe dictionary (1954), an Ewe grammar and various text books, he also contributed much to the reduction of Ewe to writing.[40]

Westerman, an enthusiastic admirer of the mission's literature and literacy programs, declared in 1905 that

> the influence of the mission had elevated Ewe to the status of a written language and had already created a sizeable amount of literature.[41]

Not quite, says Gérard, who suggested Westerman was being most generous. Gérard thinks it would have been premature to talk about Ewe literature at that time. Moreover, it is possible that

> the emergence of original writing in Ewe was probably thwarted by the fact that, from the early years of the twentieth century the German administration laid increasing emphasis on the spreading of the German language, a trend which was strengthened by the creation of a number of Reichsschulen.[42]

Nevertheless, there were some early indications of the success of the missions' literacy and literary programs in Ewe. For example, Andreas Aku translated Bunyan's The Pilgrim's Progress into Ewe as early as 1906. By the second decade of the twentieth century, Ewe was "the chief medium of instruction at the primary school [mission schools] level" (273). Catholic missionaries who competed with the Bremen mission and gained a foothold in southern Volta Region by the end of the nineteenth century began a monthly journal, Mia holo ("Our Friend") in 1894. Bremen Protestants also launched a periodical, Nutifafa na mi ("The Messenger of Peace") in 1903 Klima et al. have written about the importance of the two early publications:

> Although primarily functional religious publications, both early missionary periodicals in Ewe also served as a basis for the first attempts to write at all in Ewe. Apart from publishing pedagogically-oriented articles, studies devoted to the teaching and learning of literacy in Ewe ... these periodicals also provided the first forum for initial attempts to translate short stories, excerpts from world literature and for the writing of short original stories in Ewe. Oral poetry and other forms of oral literature, collected by expatriate or Ewe teachers and missionaries, were also recorded and published.[43]

The initial volumes of Nutifafa were printed in Bremen and then sent to Togo for distribution throughout Eweland. But after World War I Germany was forced to relinquish its control of colonies in West Africa to Britain and France and the production unit of Nutifafa was moved to Lome, Togo. Sam Amegleame has written about the re-demarcation of Ewe territory.

> Géographiquement, la littérature éwé appartient à ces deux pays, phénomene historico-politique qui remonte au partage du Togo entre la France et la Grande-Bretagne après la défaite allemande de 1918.[44]

For the Ewe people, the consequences for the division were deep:

> This split had far-reaching consequences for the literary history of Ewe. Eastern Togoland became subjected to the principles that determined cultural and educational policy through-out French Africa (273).

In Togo under the French colonial system "all official support was thus withdrawn from vernacular teaching, which became confined to religious education" (274).

The Ewes under British rule were subjected to a different set of colonial policies, one of which was the establishment of the Vernacular Literature Bureau which was in charge of teaching local languages. As well, the religious bodies, the United Free Church of Scotland which took over the Bremen missions, the Catholic church, and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church which had begun its operation in the southern Volta region, continued with the program of promoting literacy in Ewe.

Gérard and Zima point out that the first generation of indigenous Ewe writers, I.K. Hoh, E.M. Amegashie and Rev. F.K. Fiawoo, had links with Christian missions in Ghana and Togo. Many of these early Ewe authors produced didactic works based on Christian ethics and traditional Ewe values, a trend that continued into the 1950's and 1960's. Hoh, Amegashie and Fiawoo set the pace for much of Ewe writing by producing biographies, Ewe translations of famous works, historical narratives and drama.

However, distinctions have been established between the works of Hoh and Amegashie on the one hand and those of Fiawoo on the other. Klima et al. associate Hoh's work with the "transitional stage of the development from literacy to real literature."[45] In 1948, Hoh wrote a biography of one Jacob Vomawo (Jacobo Vomawo) whom he described as the St. Paul of the Ewe church. Hoh went on to write a historical narrative, Sagbadre (The Swallow, 1940). Later in his career, he turned to drama and produced plays: Prodigal Brothers which was originally written in English in 1967 and the Ewe play Srokuda (Fear Death, 1969).

Amegashie wrote a fictional biography Togbi Mawuena The Second (Chief Mawuena The Second) and published a collection of short stories, Vovoyi (Leisure Time, 1947). Other Ewe writers, such as C.A.R. Necku and Rev. L.G. Baeta published Ewe translations of works from world literature. Necku produced Ewe adaptations of Gulliver's Travels (1943) and Grimm's Tales (1943). Baeta translated into the Ewe language Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare (1954-59) as well as some of Tolstoy's short stories (1956).

The translation of works from world literature into Ewe was in furtherance of the plan to provide reading texts in Ewe, a program that also involved the publication of several instructional books. G.K. Tsekpo and P.M. Desewu have written a number of functional books for Ewe readers. Tsekpo's collection of stories, Ketonase (Open Your Ears, 1953), Tsa Kpo (Travel and Learn, 1953), Minya Zozo (Be Careful, 1959) and Bu Egnu (Think of it, 1960) are instructional writings. He also gives civic lessons in the weekly magazines, Mia Denyigba (Our Country) and Motabiala

(He who Asks the Way), issued by the Vernacular Literature Bureau. For his part, Desewu wrote a series of narratives entitled Le Nye Adaba te (As I Saw It, 1941), which could best be described as investigative reports about good citizenship. In 1934 he published Mise Gli Loo (Once Upon a Time), a title which expresses the convention for beginning the story-telling session in the Ewe tradition.

Easily one of the most prominent Ewe authors, Fiawoo was a member of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. He studied at Johnson C. Smith University in North Carolina and wrote his highly acclaimed dramatic work, Toko Atolia (The Fifth Landing Stage, 1937) during his undergraduate years. Toko Atolia won first prize for the International African Institute in London in 1937; a German version of this play was published in Berlin in 1938. Fiawoo himself provided the English translation of this play which was published in London in 1943. Other works of his in Ewe include Tuinyesi (My Rival, 1959), Fia yi Dgiehe (Fia's Upland Journey, 1959) and a panegyeric in English, Peace-Gloria, Africa Awakes to Glory. Gérard states that the "original manuscript [of Tuinyesi], composed in 1945, was destroyed when the author's house was burnt down in 1953" (275). The present version was "re-written in 1958" (275). Fiawoo shared the commitment of his colleagues to produce edifying works, but he surpassed all of them with his high artistic achievement. Gérard describes Fiawoo as being "the initiator of original indigenous authorship" (274) in Ewe.

Fiawoo influenced other Ewe authors, especially Bidi H.K. Setsoafia, his one-time assistant. Setsoafia translated a number of famous works into Ewe, notable Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, King Lear and Richard II and Chaucer's story of Griselda which was completed in 1954. Earlier he had published two plays in Ewe, Fia Agokoli (Chief Agokoli) in 1945 and Kato Fia yi dgi in 1948. Setsoafia's comedy of manners, Mede Ablotsidela (I Married a Been-To, 1956), which was published by the Bureau of Ghana Languages, won a prize in a literary competition organized by the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation. The play itself was immensely popular and contributed to the author's fame throughout Ghana. It is interesting to note that the theme of 'Been-To' was also explored in the works of Aidoo and Armah.

Many Ewe authors experimented with the novel form. For example, F.K. Nyaku wrote Kofi Nyameko Nutinya (The Life of Kofi Nyameko, 1955) and Amedzro Etholia (The Third Stranger), both of which deal with problems of growing up, much like the novels of personal development in Ghanaian fiction of the mid-1960's. Sam Obianim, who studied at Achimota and in India, wrote Amegbeto alo Agbezuge fe Nutinya (Man or The Story of Agbezuge, 1949), in the Bunyan and "everyman" fashion. Gérard describes Amegbeto as "the first piece of prose fiction ... [which] could genuinely be called a novel" (276). This novel was read over the national radio and was popular with both Ewes and non-Ewes. Obianim's other works, De Menye De (If I Had Known, 1954) and Nya zozo (Be cautious, 1961), were not as successful.

Ewe fictional writing developed tremendously with the presence of a new generation of writers like Seth Akafia and V.K. A. Glakpe. Simon Amegbleame describes Akafia's fictional work Ku Le Xome (Death at Home, 1970) as an Ewe novel with a considerable degree of sophistication. The new trend in Ewe prose fiction is represented in works of Glakpe. Gerard describes Glakpe's Adela Megbloa Wokata O (The Hunter Does Not Everything, 1972) as a novel "which bears some resemblance to the Yoruba tales of Fagunwa and Tutuola in resources and fantasy and supernatural" (277).

There are difficulties in classifying written Ewe poetry since it is closely integrated with the oral form. The musical dimension, performance and other oral elements are difficult to capture in the written art. However, there have been a few publications of poetry in Ewe: Rev. K.K. Nuatsako wrote Hakpanyawo (Words of Songs, 1967); I.K. Hoh, G.W. K. Kwasi Kuma and R.K. Kiya-Hinidza jointly wrote Henowo fe Gbe (Voices of the Singers, 1970) and L.K.M. Seshie published Akpalu fe Hawo (The Songs of Akpalu, 1973). Kofi Awoonor and Kofi Anyidoho have made major contributions with their creative writings and in their studies of oral poetry. Awoonor's essay "Some Notes on the Poetry of the Ewe" appeared in 1971. His publication, Guardians of the Sacred Word: Ewe Poetry, a transcription and translation of Ewe oral poetry, is one of the best efforts to represent that tradition in written form.

Summary

An overview of the history of Ghanaian literature shows that, generally, oral literature has remained the most common form of artistic expression. However, certain phases of this literary system have been dominated by one or another type of written literature. Also, the characteristics of Ghanaian literature are shaped according to the disposition, style and predilection of the main contributors. Between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries writing about Ghana was produced by European traders and adventures who gave accounts of their experience in the "hostile" environment of the Guinea Coast.[46] However, there was an occasional creative work such as W.F. Hedges' "Castle and Other Verses" which, according to Cardinall, was written in the seventeenth century. Among the significant fictional writings about Ghana was Aphra Behn's Oronoko (1688) which presented the black person as a romantic figure, an image that was replicated in Bandrand's Annamaboe, Prince of the Royal Africa, 1720. Bandrand wrote about the experience of the son of the chief of Annomabu, who like Oronoko, was kidnapped from his home and sold into slavery in the West Indies. This protagonist was more fortunate than Oronoko, since he was rescued from slavery by the Royal African Company which returned him to his native home.

By the end of the eighteenth century most Ghanaian writing came from liberated Ghanaian slaves (Sancho and Cugoano) living in Britain as well as from Ghanaians (Amo) who acquired western education in Europe. From what we know about their works we can justifiably claim that they represent the roots of Ghanaian written literature.

From an historical point of view, most of the writing on Ghana (starting from the nineteenth century) was the product of Ghanaians living in the Ghana. Four major strands of such works can be differentiated: translations of biblical works into local languages and books on grammar of Ghanaian languages and folk customs by church missionaries and their functionaries;[47] travel accounts by colonial administrators; jornalistic and contitutional writings by Ghanaian nationalists, journalists and other intellectuals; and writing in Arabic and Ajami which became increasingly important in the early decades of the twentieth century.

Two major fictional works in English (Ethiopia Unbound and The Blinkards) were written in the second decade of the twentieth century. It took nearly three decades for another major fictional work in English (Eighteenpence, 1943) to be written.

The 1930's and 1940's were dominated by Ghanaian language writers. The achievements of Acquaah, Fiawoo and others served as inspiration for authors like Kwabena

Nketia, Anonwoma (1951), Anwosen 1944-1949 (1952), a collection of poetry, and Sam Obianim, Amegbeto alo Agbezuge fe Nutinya (Man or The Story of Agbezuge, 1949), whose works were patronised by a large readership. Some of these writings (Anwosen and Agbezuge) have become primary texts in schools and have been read over Radio Ghana.

Literature in Ghanaian languages was given a tremendous boost with the establishment in 1952 of the Bureau of Ghana Languages, formerly The Vernacular Literature Bureau, which became the major publisher of Ghanaian language writing. Also, general support for this literature came from Nkrumah's government whose over-all objective was the promotion of indigenous Ghanaian culture. Since the 1960's publication of Ghanaian language literatures has continued at a steady pace and would compare well (in output and in some instances, quality) with Ghanaian writing in English.

The post World War Two period witnessed the emergence of popular literature which was quickly accepted by readers in urban areas. In its content and structure, popular literature has been designed for mass consumption. Two of the major authors of this literature are Mickeson and Asare Konadu.

During the period leading to independence and its aftermath, Ghanaian literature in English was heavily influenced by the anti-colonial movement. Nationalist sentiment was expressed in literary works such as Michael Dei-Anang's Cocoa Comes to Mampong (1949) and Okomfo

Anokye's Golden Stool (1959) and Swanzy's Voices of Ghana, (1958). It continues to be one of the major themes for Ghanaian literature.

In the 1960's the output of Ghanaian literature in English increased considerably. A number of Ghanaian authors wrote novels: Joseph Abruquah published The Cathechists (1966) and Amu Djoleto wrote The Strange Man (1967) about the experience of growing up which manifests the features of the Bildungsroman. Also, Efua Sutherland distinguished herself as a writer of children's literature. This trend of specialising in some literary style continued into the 1970's and 1980's. The identifiable marks of quite a number of Ghanaian authors are apparent. For example, the voice and tone of Armah or Okai are unmistakable. Also, there is a recurrence in the artistic explorations of themes such as the "been-to" syndrome, "corruption" and "political protest". The "been-to" theme has been explored in Bidi H.K. Setsofia's Ewe play, Mede Ablotsidela (I Married a Been-To, 1956), Ama Ata Aidoo's Dilemma of a Ghost (1965) and Armah's Fragments (1974). Political protest is at the heart of Casely-Hayford's Ethiopia Unbound and Armah's Two Thousand Seasons. Although nearly every Ghanaian writer has explored the issue of corruption, its most eloquent expression so far is by Armah in The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born. Ghanaian authors, like the writers of other countries, are not only conscious of each other's style, but many of them draw inspiration from common traditional sources.

Notes

[1] Other literary histories of Ghana include: Vladimir Klima, Karel Frantisek Ruzicka and Petr Zima, Literatury Cerne Afriky (an English version of this book, Black Africa, appeared in 1976), and Priebe's survey in the introduction to Ghanaian Literature (1988).

[2] Kofi Anyidoho, "Mythmaker and Mythbreaker: The Oral poet as Earwitness," African Literature in its Social and Political Dimensions, ed., Eileen Julien (Washington D.C.: Three Continents Press, 1986), 13.

[3] Emmanuel Obiechina, "Transition from Oral to Literary Tradition," Présence Africaine 144 (1987): 144.

[4] See Ruth Finnegan's Oral Literature in Africa (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970) for an in-depth analysis of the different types of oral literature.

[5] Kwabena Nketia, "The Language Problem and the African Personality, Présence Africaine 66 (1968): 168.

[6] Nketia, "Surrogate Languages of Africa," Current Trends in Linguistics, Vol. 7, ed., Thomas N. Sebeok (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1971), 699.

[7] Kwabena Nketia, "Surrogate Languages of Africa, Language Systems in Africa, ed., S.O. Anozie (New York: Conch, 1973), 14.

[8] Anyidoho, "The Present State of African Oral Literature Studies," African Literature Studies: The Present State/ L'état présent, ed., Stephen Arnold (Washington D.C.: 1985), 154.

[9] B.W. Andrzejewski, S. Pilaszewicz and W. Tyloch eds., Literature in African Languages (London: Cambridge UP, 1985), 40.

[10] Osundare, "From Oral to Written, Aspect of the Socio-Stylistic Repercussions of Transition," 4.

[11] Finnegan, Oral Literature in Africa, 15.

[12] Finnegan, "Literary versus Non-Literary: The Great Divide?" Modes of Thought: Essay on Thinking In Western and Non-Western societies, eds., Robin Hortin and Ruth Finnegan (London: Faber and Faber, 1973), 136. Further reference to this work will be made parenthetically in the text.

[13] Anyidoho, "The Haikotu Song and Dance Club of Wheta: A Communal Celebration of Individual Poetic Talent," Cross Rhythms: Papers in African Folklore 1 (1983): 173.

[14] Johny Hayes "Song and Copy: The Relation Between Oral and Printed in Kofi Awoonor's 'Dirge'," Journal of Comparative Literature 22.1 (1985): 120.

[15] Anyidoho, "The Present State of African Oral Literature Studies," 159.

[16] Gérard, African Language Literatures: Introduction to the Literary History of Sub-Saharan Africa. (Essex: Longman, 1981), 39. Further reference to this work will be made parenthetically in the text.

[17] Thomas Hodkin, "The Islamic Tradition of Ghana," Islam in Tropical Africa, ed., I.M. Lewis (Oxford: U.P., 1966), 454.

[18] Keith A. Sandiford, Measuring The Moment (London & Toronto: Associated Unversities Press, 1988), 151.

[19] Studies of the concert party in Ghana include the following: Alain Ricard, "The Concert Party as a Genre: The Happy Stars of Lome" (1974); Kwesi Yankah, "The Akan Highlife Song: A Medium of Cultural Reflection or Deflection?" (1984) and K.N. Bame, Come To Laugh: African Traditional Theatre in Ghana (1985).

[20] Daniel S. Izevbaye, "Poetry," European Language Writing in Sub-Saharan Africa, 820.

[21] R.E.G. Armattoe, Between The Forest and the Sea (Londonderry, N. Ireland), 1.

[22] Michael Dei-Anang, Wayward Lines From Africa, (London: United Society for Christian Literature, 1946), 31.

[23] Dei-Anang, Ghana Glory (London: Nelson, 1965), 14.

[24] Kofi Agovi, "A Dual Sensibility: The Short Story in Ghana, 1944-1980," Paper Presented at the Eighth International Conference on African Literature and the English Language," University of Calabar, Nigeria, May 1988, 10.

[25] Charles Angmore, "New Voices in Ghana: A Study in the Development of Ghanaian Literature in English," M.A. Thesis, Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, December 1974, 40.

[26] Janheinz Jan, Ghana's "Written Literature," Ghanaian Writing: Ghana as seen by her own Writers as well as German Authors, eds., A.W. Kayper-Mensah and Horst Wolff (Tübingen: Horst Erdmann, 1972) 236.

[27] Senanu, "Creative Writing in Ghana," Ghanaian Writing 16.

[28] Kofi Anyidoho, "Atukwei Okai and His Poetic Territory," Ghanaian Literatures, ed., Richard Priebe (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 135.

[29] (John) Atukwei, Oath of the Fontonfrom and Other Poems (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971), 75.

[30] Anyidoho, "Atukwei Okai and His Poetic Territory," 138.

[31] Richard Priebe, "Novel" European Language Writing in Sub-Saharan Africa, 835.

[32] Noel Smith, The Presbyterian Church of Ghana 1835-1960 (Accra, 1966), 54-55.

[33] Vladimir Klima, Karel Frantisek Ruzicka and Petr. Zima, eds., Black Africa Literature and Language (Durdrecht, Holland: D. Reidel, 1976), 160.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Asare Opoku, "Obituary notice," Okyeame IV (1968) 120-122. Cited in Gérard, African Language Literature, 269.

[36] Smith, The Presbyterian Church of Ghana, 141.

[37] C.C. Reindorf, History of The Gold Coast and Asante (Basel: the Missionsbuchhandlung Basel, 1895), iii.

[38] Ursula Hintze, Bibliographie der Kwa-Sprachen und der Sprachen der Togo-Restvolker (Berlin, 1959), 93. Cited in Gerard, African Language Literatures, 276.

[39] Vladimir Klima et al., Black Africa, 152.

[40] Ibid, 153.

[41] Cited in Gérard, African Language Literatures, 273.

[42] Gérard, African Language Literature, 273.

[43] Klima et al., Black Africa, 154.

[44] Simon Amegbleame, "Naissance et développement d'un corpus imprimé africain: La littérature éwé," L'Afrique littéraire et artistique 39 (1979): 37.

[45] Klima et al., Black Africa, 155.

[46] Some of these accounts are as follows: J. Hawkins's A True Declaration of the Troublesome Voyage to Guinea 1569 and Cornille Claesson "Description au récit historical du rior royanme d'Or de Guinea", Amsterdam, 1605.

[47] Examples of books on grammar are J.G. Christaller's Grammar and Dictionary of the Asante and Fanti Language called Tschi (1875) and E. Burgi Kurgefasste's Grammatik der Ewe-Sprache (1897). Translations of the Bible include the following: A.W. Hansen The Gospels of St Matthew and St. John, Translated out of the Original Greek into the Accra Language (British and Foreign Bible Society, 1843); J. Zimmerman, The Bible Translated into Ga (Stuggart, 1866) and A.W. Parker The Four Gospels in Fanti (British and Foreign Bible Society, 1896). Some of the early studies of literature in Ghana are as follows: Christaller "Literarische Arbeiten in Otschi-Dialekt" (1865); J. Heck "Literatur: zen Jahre auf der Goldkuste, Skizzen" (1868) and D. Hupperbauer "Literatur: Schrekenstage in Kumasi by Steiner" (1900).

Chapter Four

Intellectual and Historical Backgrounds

> Literature does not grow or develop in a vacuum; it is given impetus, shape, and direction and even area of concern by social, political and economic forces in a particular society.
> Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Homecoming Essays (London: HEB, 1972), xv.

Ghanaian literature, history, and politics have followed closely parallel courses: they have co-existed, have given inspiration to one another, and have been part of the general nationalist and Pan-Africanist movement.[1] These political and intellectual movements which correspond to different phases of the history of Ghana have inspired significant segments of the creative writing. Early Ghanaian literature (the late eighteenth century) developed out of the anti-slavery and anti-colonialist movements, a protest climate that set the tone for much of the later writing. Much impetus for Ghanaian literature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries also came from public agitation, newspaper reports and defiance campaigns against colonial rule. Generally, in this century, Ghanaian literature has been deployed not only as a positive element to correct the misrepresentations, distortions and over-simplifications of Africa's past but also to awaken the consciousness of the people and to exhort them to work creatively toward a better future.

The continuity of artistic preoccupations in Ghanaian literature is undeniable; the country's historical trauma is clearly the major subject of the writing. For example, one finds as much denunciation of the barbarity of slavery in Cugoano's Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species as in Two Thousand Seasons. Dei-Anang and Awoonor address the subjects of nationalism, Pan-Africanism and African culture, issues that also dominated the thoughts and writings of Casely-Hayford. Apparently many of the writers from the early (Ignatius Sancho, Ottobah Cugoano and J.E. Casely-Hayford) to the later periods (J.E. Armattoe, Michael Dei-Anang and Ama Ata Aidoo) combined the role of writers with that of politician, lawyer or statesman.[2] Politics and art are the domains of most of the writers, including those, such as Ayi Kwei Armah, who have not assumed political positions. For these authors writing is integrated into the nationalist struggle.

Early Ghanaian writers were mostly expatriates who had lived in Europe; some of them (e.g. Sancho and Cugoano) had been victims of the inhuman slave trade. In England, they and other emancipated Africans who later acquired some education wrote in order to register the suffering of black people. Their writing must be seen in the context of anti-slavery campaigns and the commitment to establish the victims' perspective of African history. In Sancho's Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho and Cugoano's Thoughts, the voice of the artist and the social activist is blended as these authors seek to rebut the propaganda of pro-slavery groups.[3] Sancho pleads with the English people to abolish slavery while Cugoano writes about the savagery and cruelty of the plantation owners in the West Indies.

With proceeds from his grocery stall, Sancho personally helped poor and destitute servants and maids, ex-slaves and descendants of slaves living in Britain. His principal interest was to promote tolerance and acceptance of black people. In Letters he mocks the conventional western image of the black person.

Cugoano's Thoughts is a direct attack on the church and British parliament for their support of slavery. He refutes aspersions about black inferiority in very clear terms and challenges Europe's imperial quest in Africa:

> I would have my African counterparts know and understand, that the destroyers and ex-slavers of men can be no Christians, for Christianity is the system of benignity and love, and all its votaries are devoted to honesty, justice, humanity, meekness, peace and goodwill to all men.[4]

Cugoano planned to use the proceeds from his book to establish a school for black people in London.

Thoughts represents one of the earliest anti-imperialist writing by an African. Keith Sandiford describes Cugoano as a forerunner of the anti-colonial movement in Africa.

> By extending the arc of anti-slavery protest to encompass the issues of colonization and

> conquest, Cugoano relates abolition to the wider ethical and political questions raised by the expansion of Europe.[5]

Cugoano's and Sancho's anti-slavery campaigns could be seen as early expressions of the anti-colonial struggles of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries and even the Pan-African movements in this century. They inaugurated the protest tradition that has characterised over two centuries of Ghanaian literature.

The nineteenth century marked the beginning of the intensification of missionary activities and the colonization process in sub-Saharan Africa. These combined forces subjugated local cultures, political institutions and economies. Christian missionaries and European imperialists for the most part reversed, distorted or replaced the African heritage with a foreign system. The colonization process which had begun in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was formalised at the Berlin Conference of 1885 where the various European imperial countries reached agreement on how to maintain effective control of their colonies. The missionaries had always been a step ahead of the colonialists, fighting their own battles for the souls, hearts, and eventually, the will and the material wealth of Africans.

Missionary education was supposed to make the recipients docile and acquiescent. Indeed, the religious programming was successful and produced numerous converts. The missionaries condemned local customs which they declared to be backward and pagan practices. The converts were promoted as champions of western civilization, encouraged to be contemptuous of the indigenous culture and to limit contact with their "primitive" country people. For the most part, indigenous culture was not integrated into missionary education as the missionaries aimed at driving a wedge between the people by separating the Christians from the non-Christians.

However, the first intellectuals to challenge colonial rule were educated under the auspices of the church. Discontent with the missionary teachings merged with the general protest against colonial rule. The dominant issues in the early protest movement were the devaluation of indigenous tradition, the arbitrary appropriation of traditional land by the colonial government and the tightening grip of colonialism. Wesleyan Methodism became the seed-bed of early nationalism in Ghana. The principal agitators, educated Cape Coast men (such as Kofi Asaam, Kobina Fynn Asaam, Attoh Ahumah, John Mensah Sarbah, J.E. Casely-Hayford and Kobina Sekyi) who were trained in institutions established by the Wesleyans, saw beneath the veneer of white pretension. Ahumah, Mensah-Sarbah, Casely-Hayford and Sekyi had travelled across West Africa, studied in Sierra Leone and Britain, and were aware of the application of the law in those countries. As a result, these intellectuals challenged the legality of colonial authority.

Many of these intellectuals were politicians, essayists or journalists. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the print media, especially Cape Coast newspapers, were used to publicize nationalist sentiments. The newspapers printed mostly current and non-literary articles and only occasionally featured creative works. The West African Herald, initially called The Accra Herald and the first newspaper to be produced entirely by indigenous Ghanaians, gave strong support to the nationalist movement. The editor, Charles Bannerman was a committed natonalist who dedicated the Herald to the articulation of protest, exposure of colonial exploitation and the rallying of support for mass action. In his editorial of October 5, 1857 Bannerman defended the political direction of his newspaper.

> Generally speaking, a Journal that enunciates its opinion without fear or favor is admired and respected by the public just in proportion as it is detested by the Authorities whose faults it exposes. A public Journal should be a public friend - the friend of the people, and the friend of the Authorities - the champion of order and liberty - the opposer of anarchy and of despotism. In order to be respectable, a Journal must be conducted in a spirit of rigid impartiality - with decorum - with boldness .... We sincerely respect the Authorities, and for that reason we shall keep our eyes on them, so that we may, whenever they slip from the right path, humbly endeavour to point out the road. If we sometimes boldly tell the Government what is the public feeling on such or such a subject,

> the Government should not be offended. It ought rather to rejoice. Is it not well to know how men consider themselves affected by our actions?[6]

The confidence expressed in this article is typical of the non-literary as well as literary writings of early Ghanaian nationalists.

Protest against colonial rule using the medium of the newspaper became widespread in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Gold Coast Times, another Ghanaian owned paper, regularly carried editorials that denounced colonial administration:

> The system of Government pursued by the British on the Gold Coast had been generally pronounced as most defective. This piece of land is simply ruled by a staff of foreigners who know just as much of the needs and requirements of the natives as their ancestors did many centuries back. The natives are entirely without representation and the consequence is that they are often branded as slaves. Ordinances or measures are repeatedly framed by the ruling power: but whether they are compatible with the interests of the natives or not is a question about which our authorities do not trouble themselves.[7]

This type of protest so characteristic of Ghanaian nationalism also appeared in early Ghanaian literature and political speeches.

The West African Herald and The Gold Coast Times served as platforms for the propagation of ideas about culture and nationalism and were the major outlets available at that time to the few Ghanaian intellectuals for writing of any kind. At least one newspaper editor, Casely-Hayford, went on to produce more literary works. These newspapers served as rallying points for editors, contributors and readers and thus galvanized the nationalist movement while helping to develop self-confidence and a sense of community among Ghanaian nationalists. Regular features in the local media, such as land issues, colonialism, culture, nationalism and Pan-Africanism became major pre-occupations of Ghanaian literature. To truly understand the course of Ghanaian literature it is necessary to give serious consideration to these early newspapers. Social and political discontent publicised by the newspapers helped to shape the sensibilities of writers of the day and also to provide them with their subject matter.

The Gold Coast Times occasionally published creative writing, usually works dealing with patriotic issues. The following evidence supports the argument about the significance of the news media for the development of Ghanaian literature. On February 11, 1882, The Gold Coast Times of Cape Coast published a poem entitled, "Hail Elais, Child of beauty, glory of our native land." This newspaper also published another poem, "The Native African emancipated from foreign slavery, returning to his fatherland and apostrophising his native palm trees, by an Anglo-Fantee." On May 13, 1882 The Gold Coast Times published "The Future of the Gold Coast", a loosely structured poem in which the poet expresses strong passion for his homeland in the face of western racism.

> Beloved land of the Negro ... where can I find happiness? In Europe? No. For I am considered among them as a creature little above the monkey .... God has engendered in me the seed of Greatness ... What has God given to the white man which he has not given to me? My beloved land is like a young virgin, comely, beautiful and artless, she is lovable, why should I love another?[8]

The campaign of the news media toward strengthening the nationalist movement continued into the twentieth century. In the last decades of the nineteenth century, nationalism in the Gold Coast centered around the issues of land, culture and colonial rule. The Gold Coast Aborigines Rights Protection Society (ARPS) was formed by the chiefs and the educated men of Accra and Cape Coast to contest the British colonial government's claim to large land holdings. By the Land Bill of 1879, the British colonizers declared huge portions of the colony (mostly timber producing regions and mineral rich areas) as "wasteland" and therefore free for appropriation by the Crown. Atto Ahumah, who was the editor of the Cape Coast newspaper, The Gold Coast Methodist Times, gave wide coverage to the land issue. He would not be silenced by his employer, the Methodist Church, who accused him of using a religious newspaper for political gains. In the November 15, 1897 issue of The Gold Coast Methodist Times, Ahumah wrote:

> We have been indoctrinated as to how a religious paper should be conducted ... we do not intend to wrap up our religion for Sunday use only; we shall continue to go on, so long as we are permitted to be organically connected with this periodical. Our silence on matters political, so far as they transverse the fundamental principles of Christian faith, will only synchronize with our absence from the editorial chair which position, of course, we occupy in sufferance.[9]

Ahumah examined the careers of early Ghanaian nationalists in his Memoirs of West African Celebrities. He believed in the authenticity of indigenous values and advocated the teaching of the Fante language and culture. Ahumah encouraged his country people to use local names and he set an example by changing his name from Samuel Solomon to Samuel Richard Brew Attoh Ahumah in 1892. It is noteworthy that his close ally, Casely-Hayford, promoted the same agenda of taking pride in national culture and languages.

Ahumah's contemporaries, John Mensah Sarbah, Joseph Casely-Hayford, Kobina Sekyi and Kwaggir Aggrey were equally highly educated in constitutional issues, confident in the values of the African tradition and passionate about national matters. Mensah Sarbah led the ARPS and also wrote the Fante National Constitution (1906). In his book, he promotes the value of the traditional culture and describes the beauty of the kente cloth. He also calls for the study of local languages in schools.

An educator, Kwaggir Aggrey is recognised for his contributions to nationalism, Pan-Africanism and Ghanaian culture. He served as a vice-principal of Achimota School (Accra) and joined a British colonial administrator, Gordon Guggisberg, in implementing the Educational Ordinance of 1925, by which they sought to reform education in Ghana. Aggrey was a true humanist who never lost faith in the redeeming qualities of human beings in spite of widespread cruelty and injustice. This Ghanaian intellectual advocated the right of black people to freedom in Africa, America and other parts of the world. He travelled across America and called for improvements in the social and economic conditions of African-Americans. Aggrey is well-known for his anecdotes and philosophical sayings. He called for an end to racism and for white people to come together with black people. Black and white people, he said, are like the black and white keys of a piano; when they come together, they produce rich music.

The political activism and artistic commitment of these early Ghanaian intellectuals to addressing Pan-African, national and cultural issues constitute the foundation of Ghanaian writing. This position is underscored by Lang who states:

> The fact remains that the specificity of Ghanaian literature, and to a lesser extent all of west African literature in English, owes much to the Gold Coast period and its precocious development. Both the comparatively rapid rise of that literature and its thematic concern with the many

> aspects of modernization and national pride can be, moreover, traced back to the early growth of a literate class educated largely in the Gold Coast itself, whether the imaginative works in question were paraliterary, ideological, or "serious" in intent. Those who emerged from the class had to confront first the contradictions of colonialism and then independence, as writers and in many cases as politicians as well.[10]

The issues of nationalism and Pan-Africanism continue to dominate Ghanaian literature.

The national cause in particular and the predicament of black people in general were the dominating issues in the writings and public pronouncements of Casely-Hayford. He distinguished himself as a political activist, a passionate public speaker and a writer and was a pioneer of Ghanaian/African nationalism. Casely-Hayford wrote Ethiopia Unbound (1911), a significant literary work on the issues of nationalism and culture, subjects which received wide coverage in the newspapers.

Casely-Hayford began his early education in Methodist institutions in Cape Coast, studied journalism at Fourah Bay College and read for a law degree at Cambridge. Upon his return to the Gold Coast, he joined the ARPS and soon became one of its leaders. Together with Attoh Ahumah, Mensah Sarbah and others, Casely-Hayford helped to organise nationalist protest against the Land Bill of 1879. Casely-Hayford also challenged the British land-claim through writing.

In Gold Coast Native Institutions (London, 1903), he describes the complex social and political organizations in the traditional society. This early nationalist talks about the land, the stool and the gods as fundamental elements which are integral to the indigenous Ghanaian tradition. In another work, The Truth About the West Africa Land (London, 1913), he explains that the land is the basic essence for the peoples' existence. Casely-Hayford addressed the issues of freedom and dignity for black people and the question of land in an editorial opinion of The Gold Coast Leaders, a newspaper he himself established. These issues were also the beses of his fictional work Ethiopia Unbound.

A master of the gentle art of persuasion, Casely-Hayford was effective whether addressing The League of Nations or giving a speech in a secondary school in the Gold Coast. He castigated the authorities at Downing Street, London, by announcing that the union of West Africa was necessary and stating that such a development was only a prelude to the total liberation of Africa. In an address to the National Congress of British West Africa (December 1929), Casely-Hayford declared his commitment to fight to regain dignity for all black people.

> In these days when there is a tendency among the races to come together in their natural groups, it will be insincere for us to pretend that African nationhood does not interest us .... Indeed while propagandists of another race are spreading abroad doctrines which may submerge our continent

> and make the black man perpetually a hewer of wood and drawer of water, it will be criminal in us to remain silent, and to pretend that those matters do not concern us.[11]

Along with many of his contemporaries, Casely-Hayford addressed issues concerning African identity and black civilization and he also advocated cultural nationalism as a means of attaining self-respect and self-reliance. He acknowledged the important contributions of other black scholars and statesmen. Casely-Hayford was inspired by Edward Blyden who in the nineteenth century wrote Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race to register Africa's contributions to world civilization. He read the works of the Sierra Leonean, Africanus Horton, who projected in a positive way the values of African culture.

Casely-Hayford's life and writings show a commitment to African people. Ethiopia Unbound is the work of an ecclectic mind, one that is well aware of the significant contribution of his people to world culture. In this literary work (which will be discussed in Chapter Seven) Casely-Hayford is an early precursor of movements such as négritude and Pan-Africanism. The Pan-Africanist, George Padmore, who became Nkrumah's confidante, described Casely-Hayford as the John the Baptist who prepared the way for Nkrumah.

Like his contemporary Casely-Hayford, Kobina Sekyi grew up in Cape Coast. Later he went to Britain for his post-secondary education and upon his return he became an active member of the ARPS. The significance of Sekyi as a cultural nationalist has been realized recently with the unearthing of his comic satire, The Blinkards (which was written in 1915, but published in 1974). This dramatic work is Sekyi's criticism of the educated Ghanaian (African) for depreciating indigenous values. The real "blinkards" are the educated Ghanaians who wear a veneer of western culture and who ape European manners. The Blinkards is a continuation of the tradition of proclaiming national/race pride in Ghanaian writing, a trend that connects Sekyi with early writers (Cugoano) and post World War Two writers (Dei-Anang and Awoonor). The political, cultural and literary contributions of Casely-Hayford, Sekyi, Aggrey and others must be linked to similar endeavours by other Ghanaians after World War Two.

The nationalist movement after World War Two benefited from improvements in the social and economic conditions in the Gold Coast. Some of these developments included the tremendous growth in the population and economy and the return home of Ghanaian troops who had served in the war. A number of new towns were established and some of the old ones grew in size. Cocoa (Ghana's major cash crop) was cultivated extensively mostly along the Akwapim Ridge and in the Ashanti and Brong Ahafo regions, for the purpose of export. There was a rail and road network established which linked the mining towns and the ports. Communication improved with the establishment of telegraph and radio broadcast services.

The self-assurance and confidence that came with improvements in the economy gave momentum to the nationalist struggle which in the post World War Two period was dominated by J.B. Danquah and Nkrumah, against whose personal and intellectual presence modern Ghanaian writing must be read. These two patriots later became rivals because they were increasingly committed to different paths as the means of bringing about freedom. Danquah formed the United Gold Coast Convention (U.G.C.C.) whose leading members belonged, like Danquah himself, to the upper middle class elite. He believed in negotiation and a gradual approach in the struggle for independence.

Danquah's strategy was declared slow and ineffective by Nkrumah, who adopted the motto "Independence Now". Nkrumah, the father of Ghana's independence, was influenced by Ghandi's doctrine of non-violence, and so organized peaceful rallies, protest marches, boycotts and other acts of non-cooperation with the Colonial Government. Nkrumah's call for direct mass action led to confrontation with the colonial administration which responded promptly by imprisoning him. However, in the elections held for the Constitutional Assembly, he was elected leader, even though he was still in prison.

Nkrumah drew inspiration from early Ghanaian nationalists like Yaa Asantewa and Casely-Hayford, whose work he claimed to have read. He sat at the feet of leading Pan-Africanists and absorbed from them the ideologies and philosophies of leading Black activists such as George Padmore, who became his advisor during his presidency. Nkrumah made a deep impression at the Pan-Africanist Congress held in Manchester in the mid-1940's. In his speech marking Ghana's Independence, March 06, 1957, Nkrumah announced that the world must take note that a new African had emerged, one capable and willing to take charge of his own affairs. He also put the imperialists on short notice by declaring that Ghana's independence was only a first victory in the series of battles for the total freedom of Africa. Nkrumah directed efforts toward the national liberation struggle and provided material support for liberation movements in Guinea, Mali, Rhodesia, Guinea Bissau, etc. He worked tirelessly for African unity by cajoling, persuading and convincing African leaders to rally for unification. Ghanaians were made conscious of their national and Pan-African identity, and educated about events affecting Africans and Africans in the diaspora. Nkrumah invited Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr. and other Pan-African activists to Ghana to share in and contribute to the African nationalist experience.

The first president of Ghana believed that cultural liberation was linked to the anti-colonial struggle. A sincere advocate of the African personality, he maintained effigies and symbols to reflect his positive feelings about African culture. At national functions Nkrumah would appear in a Northern smock or an Ashante kente. He built a number of institutions such as Arts Council for the development and promotion of Ghanaian culture. In response to this positive environment for nationalism, Ghanaian artists produced works celebrating their culture and the achievements of their nation. For example, Dei-Anang wrote poems about national landmarks such as Akosombo Hydro-Electricity Dam and the history of Cocoa in Ghana. Also, an anthology, Voices of Ghana (1958) was published to commemorate Ghana's liberation from colonial rule. The Arts Centre and Drama Studio in Accra produced plays and musical activities to celebrate Ghana's independence. Under Nkrumah's government the Bureau of Ghana Languages (1952) (formerly the Vernacular Literature Bureau, under the colonial government) and the Ghana Publishing Corporation (1965) were established. These two institutions have become the main publishers of modern Ghanaian literature.

The greatest growth and expansion in education in Ghana so far occurred under Nkrumah's administration.[12] During the transitional phase leading to Ghana's independence, Nkrumah's Convention People's Party won a majority of seats in the Constitutional Assembly. He used the opportunity to improve education. Nkrumah introduced the Accelerated Development Program which had the goal of providing education for every child of school-going age. He believed that Ghana's progress could only be measured by the material well-being of its citizens, by the number of pupils in school and by the quality of education.

After independence Nkrumah set up the Ghana Education Trust which was charged with the duty of setting up second cycle institutions in all the regions of Ghana. He offered scholarships and other incentives for promoting education in the relatively less developed Northern Ghana. In 1961, Nkrumah established the Ghana Educational Act which made education free and compulsory for the first ten years of schooling. It was illegal for parents to neglect to send their children of school-going age to school. Nkrumah also implemented the Accelerated Educational Policy by which text books were provided for free to students in the first and second cycle institutions. The University College of Gold Coast achieved the status of a full university. Two new tertiary institutions, the University of Cape Coast (for training teachers) and the University of Science and Technology were established.

The expansion in education had major consequences for Ghanaian literature. The opening up of more schools and colleges led to an increase in literature and literary activities. Beier and Jahn label the period of Nkrumah's administration as the lean phase of Ghanaian writing. Nothing can be further from the fact. Nkrumah's educational and publishing programs created the right environment for the production of literature. Writers, of course, are not produced overnight; they develop as a result of sustained training during which they experiment and excel at what they do best. That there exists a large body of writing in Ghana today is a vindication of the sound educational programs implemented during the Nkrumah era.

Under colonial rule, there were few people with the appropriate training and awareness to address the social, economic and political anomalies in the society. There were not many Ghanaians who could articulate the frustrations of the people in written expression. Moreover, there were limited avenues for publishing. In any case almost all the facilities for publishing were controlled by the missions and the colonial administration. In the period leading up to independence there was a slow increase in the number of channels for disseminating written literature and in the facilities for training potential writers. During the post-independence era, the government and private entrepreneurs established a variety of institutions for publishing literature. As has been maintained, a sound educational program augurs well for the development of literature. The literary fruits of Nkrumah's educational programs were being realised toward the end of his administration.

It is logical to expect that students of the educational system would have to undergo training in order to embark on literary careers. Indeed, the gestation period of a literary work could be very long. It is inconceivable that the Ghana Publishing Corporation established in 1965 could have produced books immediately. Thus, it needs to be stated that Nkrumah's educational programs prepared the stage for the launching and sustenance of modern Ghanaian literature. One of the most prolific periods of writing occurred in the late 1960's.

As expected and consistent with the tradition of Ghanaian writing we have elucidated above, many of the writings during the Nkrumah era were in response to the social, economic and political changes in the society. Priebe is correct in his view that Nkrumah's

> tenure in office as independent Ghana's first leader promised psychological motivation behind the development of the novel and the audience interest in it. More significantly perhaps, that tenure provided the thematic basis of the first Ghanaian novels.[13]

Priebe also maintains that "Nkrumah's fall created political and economic conditions with which the novel could develop".[14] This statement could apply to other genres.

After the overthrow of Nkrumah by the army and police in 1966 many of the educational institutions were poorly maintained or abandoned. This coup marked the beginning of Ghana's demise. It set the country on a downward spiral with the accumulation of debt, the spread of corruption and a general feeling of disappointment and resignation. It has become difficult for Ghanaians to remain optimistic about the future. Having been led after 1966 by one so-called revolutionary regime after another (from National Liberation Council to Supreme Military Councils One and Two, to Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, to the People's National Defence Council), Ghanaians have become pessimistic.

Ghanaian writing since the mid 1960's has been dominated by a feeling of angst. There are obvious parallels between the aggravated economic conditions and the major thematic thrusts of this literature. In response to the deepening economic and political malaise, Ghanaian writers have monitored the fears, pains, changes and hopes of the society, drawing impetus from the disenchantment and disillusionment in the society. One of the most powerful statements on Ghana's social and economic malady is Armah's The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born, which some critics claim is an indictment of Nkrumah's government. Armah's anatomical diagnosis of corruption in Ghana is close to reality. Other Ghanaian writers, Awoonor, Anyidoho and Okai have written about the post-independence era, but from a somewhat different perspective.

It is imperative to place post-Independence literature in relation to the protest writing that preceded it. Similar social, historical and political factors constitute the background of more than two centuries of protest tradition in Ghanaian literature.

Notes

[1] In this dissertation, early nationalism and Pan-Africanism have been defined as a common struggle against colonial abuse and protest against arbitrary appropriation of traditional land by the colonial administration. It was not as yet a campaign for self-rule. Most of the advocateurs were intellectuals who were educated in places like Achimota (Ghana) Fourah Bay (Sierra Leone), Kings College (Nigeria) and London, and who were aware of protests of Africans and African descendants. These nationalists supported each other, as they travelled across Africa, Europe and America and exchanged ideas and strategies.

[2] Sancho and Cugoano led protest movements in London against slavery while Casely-Hayford led protests against colonial rule in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Dei-Anang, Awoonor and Aidoo were all government officials.

[3] From the seventeenth century, pro-slavery intellectuals like Thomas Hobbes and John Locke campaigned vigorously in defence of that institution. Others like the Duke of Clarence condemned the abolitionists whom he labelled anarchist. He declared that slavery was vital for the maintenance of England's economy. That chilling remark has been echoed in varied versions by the supporters of apartheid in South Africa, a system with roots in slavery.

[4] Ottobah Cugoano, Thoughts and Sentiments on The Evil of Slavery (London: Paul Mall, 1969), 83-84.

[5] Keith Sandiford, Measuring The Movement (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1988), 112.

[6] The Accra Herald 3 (October 5, 1857). Cited in K.A.B. Jones-Quartey, History, Politics and Early Press in Ghana: The Fiction and Facts (Accra: GPC, 1975), 74.

[7] The Gold Coast Times (April 8 1874). Cited in Jones-Quartey, History, Politics and Early Press, 83.

[8] The Gold Coast Times (February 11, 1882). Cited by Hans W. Derbrunner, A History of Christianity in Ghana (Accra: Waterville, 1967), 228.

[9] Attoh Ahumah The Gold Coast Methodist Times (November 15, 1897). Cited by Derbrunner, History of Christianity in Ghana, 233-234. John Mensah Sarbah contested the legality of the Bond of 1844, the treaty by which the British assumed control over the forts and castles in the Gold Coast. According to Sarbah, the Gold Coast people never ceded sovereignty to the British. He took the fight to the Gold Coast Legislative Council (which was set up by the British)

where he distinguished himself for his rhetoric and deep love for the country.

[10] George Lang, "Ghana and Nigeria," European Language Writing in Sub-Saharan Africa, ed., Albert Gérard (Budapest: Akademiai Kiado, 1966), 115.

[11] "Public Speeches Delivered by J.E. Casely-Hayford," West African Leadership, ed, Magnus J. Sampson (Ilfracombe, Stockwell: 1951), 88. Casely-Hayford's Ethiopia Unbound is fully discussed in Chapter 7.

[12] Data on Growth and Expansion of Education in Ghana:

Year	Primary Schools	Boys	Girls	Total
1930	340	32,224	9,693	41,915
1940	467	46,631	15,201	61,832
1950	1,592	NA	NA	204,263
1957	4,312	389,623	181,957	571,580
1965/66	10,421	819,679	585,250	1,404,929
1980/81	12,288	NA	NA	1,906,984

Year	Secondary Schs	Boys	Girls	Total
1930	4	528	10	538
1940	5	1,114	85	1,199
1950	12	2,280	498	2,776
1957	38	8,044	1,816	9,860
1965/66	129	37,292	12,530	49,822
1980/81	205	NA	NA	113,112

Sources: H.O.A. MacWilliam and M.A. Kwamena-Poh, The Development of Education in Ghana: An Outline (London: Longman, 1975). Ghana Educational Service, Planning Division, Accra.

[13] Richard Priebe, "The Novel," European-Language Writing in Sub-Saharan Africa, 835.

[14] Ibid. The social and political malaise which characterised the post-Nkrumah period spurred much creative writing in the late sixties and early seventies.

Chapter Five

The Development of Writing and Publishing

Writing

In one of the most memorable passages of African fictional writing, Ezeulu, the hero of Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God* explains why he sends his son, Oduche, to a mission school:

> I want one of my sons to join these people [the Christian mission] and be my eye there. If there is nothing in it you will come back. But if there is something there, you will bring home my share. The world is like a mask dancing. If you want to see it well, you do not stand in one place.[1]

The chief priest of Umuaro is convinced that it is only by understanding their ways that he can challenge whitemen. He is aware of the power that comes with western education and so he compels his son to learn to read and write; Ezeulu wants Oduche to be his 'eye' and 'ear' in the mission school. The chief priest counsels his son: "If anyone asks you why you must be sent to learn these new things tell them a man must dance the dance prevalent in his time" (Achebe, 46). According to the narrator of *Arrow of God*

> If Oduche had any reluctance left after his father had talked to him it was removed as soon as he began to go church. He found that he could learn very quickly and he began to think of the day when he could speak the language of the whiteman. (46)

Oduche sits apart from the rest of his family, completely absorbed in learning the alphabet. Later, urged by missionary teachers, he tries to harm a royal python, a symbol of ancestor worship. Oduche's attempt to suffocate this snake in a box, which was made for him by a missionary carpenter, is symbolic of the strangling of the traditional African religion by the new Christian forces.

Being the chief priest of Ulu, the traditional god of the Igbos, Ezeulu realises he should not have allowed his son to join the white man's religion and school. Consequently, Ezeulu's enemies see his action as a betrayal of the people and this misunderstanding eventually led to his tragedy. The chief priest also had a personal confrontation with an official of the colonial administration who imprisons him, thereby disrupting the political and social order of Umuaro.

It is clear from the sequence of Achebe's novels (and of course, the history of Africa) that the Christian missions endured and established many schools and churches. A former pupil of the mission school, Obi Okonkwo, the protagonist of No Longer At Ease, continued his education in London, England. Later he returned to Igboland in Eastern Nigeria to take up a government position. However, Okonkwo discovered that he could no longer accept certain traditional cultural practices. He became a misfit and could not play any positive role among his own people.

Oduche's experience is typical and reflects the impact of missionary activity on sub-Saharan Africa. He acquires the material culture of the West and undergoes training in a missionary literacy program. Oduche, unlike any member of his own family, wears a singlet and keeps his slate and chalk in a wooden box. These new properties, which have been supplied by the Christian mission, symbolise his separation from the traditional way of life. By teaching Oduche to read and write the missionaries have offered offer him a powerful tool to express himself, to proclaim the richness of his culture and, even, to protest the presence of the missionaries and the colonisers. The repeated exercise and murmerings which characterise his attempts to learn the alphabet in effect prepare the grounds for the development of literacy and written literature. In a sense, the achievement of Achebe himself and others became possible because of the foundation laid by the likes of Oduche.

Had the power of the Umuaro chief priest extended to Northern Nigeria and other parts of West Africa, he would have discovered that Moslems had entrenched themselves within the indigenuous culture long before the arrival of the Christian missionaries. The early history of Islam in Ghana shows a serious effort on the part of Moslem scholars and religious teachers to introduce Islamic culture and literacy in Ghana. As an indication of their success, a significant Islamic literary tradition developed in Northern Ghana, the area where Moslem influence was most prevalent, toward the end of the nineteenth century. However, Islamic learning was not widespread throughout Ghana nor widely disseminated even in the northern part of the country. The Arabic script was mostly used by religious teachers and leaders and there was no significant effort to teach ordinary believers. In contrast, Christian religious groups developed and promoted literacy on a large scale. They adapted the Roman alphabet for writing in local languages and provided support for the translations and recordings of biblical texts and orature. (The actual details of the publications of the missionaries and the converts as well as the works of other Ghanaians who were directly and indirectly influenced by the Chruch missions have been stated already in Chapter Three.) Because of and in spite of their activities, Christian missions are recognised for their notable contribution to the development of Ghanaian literature.[2]

Writing in the Moslem fashion existed in West Africa prior to the arrival of the Christians. The tradition of Islamic learning existed in the western Sudanese States by the twelfth century. In a comparative analysis of the history of Islamic and western oriented learning in West Africa Emmanuel Obiechina notes:

> The growth of written literature in West Africa is a process which is, often erroneously, associated solely with the introduction of Western-oriented literacy into West Africa. The truth is that the

> Arabic script had already been in existence several centuries before the arrival of the Roman script in West Africa.[3]

Petr Zima, Albert Gérard, Ivor Wilks and Thomas Hodgkin also substantiate that in West Africa the history of Islamic writing is longer than that of western writing. Written literature first developed there from the Arabic script.

Islamic religion was introduced in the western Sudanese States in the tenth and eleventh centuries in the wake of the extensive trade links with the Berbers and Tuaregs of North Africa and the Arabs of the Middle East. Except for the campaigns of the Berber dynasty, the Almoravids, in the eleventh century to win converts, the spread of Islam in the Sudanese States was peaceful. Moslem teachers and marabouts settled in the major trading centres and taught their Sudanese students. Some of the rulers, notably Mansa Kankan Musa of Mali and Askia Mohammed of Songhai, were devout believers. Mansa Musa undertook a pilgrimmage to Mecca in the 1320's. By the fourteenth century, Timbuktu had become the centre of Islamic learning and Arabic had become the language for writing in court, the mosque and other Islamic centres. From the Sudanese States Islam spread to the Savannah belt of West Africa to centres like Kona and Katsina. These new centres increasingly became important following the break-up of Songhai, the last of the Sudanese States. By the nineteenth century, Islamic activities were concentrated in Northern Nigeria, and the Futa Dyula region of Senegal.

It is conceivable that Islamic learning reached Ghana before the nineteenth century. Evidence of the presence of Muslim communities in Ghana by the second decade of the nineteenth century comes from a surprising source. A British merchant, James Bowdich who visited Kumasi around 1819, recorded in his diary (Mission from Cape Coast to Ashantee, London, 1819) that Asante chiefs employed Islamic clerks. It was alleged that a member of Bowdich's missions remained in Kumasi until February 1819. He was said to have developed friendly relations with the Muslim community and learnt Arabic. Historians of Ghana, J.B. Webster and Adu Boahene testify (in The Revolutionary Years: West Africa Since 1800) that there was a trade link between Hausa merchants and Northern Ghanaian kola-nut producers as early as the fifteenth century. Gérard also substantiates the fact that by "the eighteenth century writing in Arabic was common among Gonja Muslims for correspondence, private and commercial, and recording genealogies".[4]

According to Hodgkin, there was an important trade and cultural connection between Ghana region and the Hausa states. It is on record that a Ghanaian Islamic poet, Shaik Umar Bamba, produced a collection of poems in praise of Mohammed. One of Bamba's poems, "Mawhub al-Mannan" is dated February 21, 1863 (Ramadan A.H. 1279).

In the nineteenth century Islam in West Africa assumed a fundamentalist character. Muslim leader, Uthman Dan Fodio and his relatives, Sultan Bello and Abdullah, all of whom were eminent Islamic scholars, campaigned for authenticity, tradition and reform. This fundamental movement was most active in the Hausa states. These Moslem reformers also began their religious campaigns in the northern parts of West Africa across the Savannah belt. Around the same time in Africa's history, Christian missionaries launched their active proselytization missions in the coastal towns of West Africa.

The revival of Muslim faith led to an increase in interest in Islamic learning. Hodgkin labels the period, the "Islamic literary renaissance"[5] in West Africa. Obiechina confirms the fact that the Islamic reform movement produced literary works covering "the entire range of the traditional Islamic sciences including theology, exegetics, law, literature, grammar and mysticism" (Obiechina, 64).

Usman Don Fodio expounded ideological and doctrinal matters in local languages. He wrote in Hausa so as to be understood by the masses. Usman diffused all anxiety regarding the propriety of writing in local languages in Arabic script. He made the practice acceptable, thus paving the way for the development of indigenous literatures written in Arabic letters. By the nineteenth century,

> the languages of such nations as the Hausa and the Fulani, who have been relatively long in contact with Islam, have developed a

> comparatively large number of vernacular texts in Arabic script (called 'ajamiya, from Arabic 'foreign, non-Arabic').[6]

The Arabic script was also used for writing in languages such as Wolof (Senegal), Kanuri (Nigeria) and Dagbani (Ghana). However, Moslem scholars maintained a distinction between ajami, which is used to address ordinary subjects, and Arabic, which is used to discuss important religious subjects.

According to Hogkin, there are so far not enough facts available to make a complete assessment of the total impact of Islam on indigenous Ghanaian culture in the nineteenth century. But he concedes that

> there is evidence - by the end of the nineteenth century - of a tendency towards a fusion of the two traditions, and the emergence of a composite and cosmopolitan intellectual community, for whom Arabic was the dominant, and Hausa the main subsidiary, literary language.[7]

Northern Ghanaian towns like Salaga, Kete Krachi and Wa had became very important centres of Islamic learning. There was considerable demand for literary works in both Hausa and Ajami. A large body of this writing was for religious purposes, but there were literary works about local events, history, and translations and paraphrases of works from Classical Arabic literature. In some instances, for example, Ta'rikh ahl wala (a history of the Kings and Imans of Wa, 1922), two versions (Hausa and Arabic) of the work appeared.

The form and content of much of the writing in Northern Ghana in the nineteenth century shows the continuing link with the Islamic tradition. Umar's disputations and poetry in both Hausa and Arabic are based on analogous forms in Arabic literature. He uses conventions of classical Arabic verse in "Tanbin al-ikhwan fi dhikr al-ahzan", a poem of 248 verses about the lack of morality and values in Salagar, Another Ghanaian writer, Abu Bakr uses the letter form in "Bahr al-haqq," a poem urging Moslems to unite. A strong Arabic influence on Islamic literature in Ghana continues to this day.

However, Islamic literature is a minority tradition in Ghana. Compared with Ghanaian literature written in the Latin script, Islamic literature has had limited impact on the school system, critics, and literacy communities in Ghana. The primary reason is that the Arabic script has a limited diffusional facility. Hausa and Arabic writing was copied "by hand [recited] in public places".[8] Islamic learning was practically restricted to religious leaders. Moreover, the Arabic script has not been associated with the forces that have ruled Ghana from the colonial period to the present time. The power base of the various administrations has always been in the south where western influence has been most prevalant. Consequently, writing in the Latin script has been widely distributed because of the Christian missionaries' access to the printing press, publishing and distribution facilities.

The Christian church was "the chief agent in the spread of literacy and the intiation of literary activities in West Africa" (Obiechina, 67). This position is re-affirmed by Albert Gérard, Stanislaw Paliszewick, Petr Zima, Kwabena Nketia and Kofi Awoonor. However, the earliest forms of writing in Ghana using the Roman alphabet have been attributed to European administrators and traders who settled on the coast of West Africa. These include the written agreements European traders obtained from illiterate chiefs regarding trading privileges and land titles.

Early European settlers introduced limited programs in literacy mainly for mulatto children and the sons of chiefs and local merchants. In a traveller's report titled, "Remarks on the country extending from Cape Palmers to the River Congo," Captain John Adam, a British sea adventurer, wrote an account describing how Europeans traders in West Africa taught local people reading and writing. In 1529 the Portuguese ruler, King John III, was said to have given written orders to Estovao da Gama, Governor of Elmina, to teach the local people how to read and write, and to sing and pray. On January 1, 1642, a Dutch missionary, Rev. Meynaert Hendricksen (other spellings of his name include Henydricksen, Hendrickxz and Heijndrixsz) wrote from Ghana to the headquarters of the mission in Holland,

> A school is very necessary. It should not only teach the youth how to read and write, but it should also lay the foundation of Christian religion.[9]

The British Royal African Company (the British replaced the Dutch who had replaced the Portuguese) instructed their agents to teach Africans how to read and write. The Fante chief, John Courantee (Koranteng?) attended a castle school. Chief Courantee was said to recite the alphabet while he bathed, smoked his pipe or sipped his rum.

British traders and colonial administrators developed a program by which they sent the sons of chiefs and mulattoes to England for education and missionary training. Debrunner, a historian of the Christian church in Ghana, claims that

> The practice of sending Africans to England for education had already begun to be popular in the eighteenth century. We hear there were often fifty or more such boys in the schools of Liverpool alone, most of them coming from the Gold Coast. (Derbrunner, 65)

A beneficiary of the program, Philip Quarcoo was ordained as a deacon in St. James Church on March 25, 1765. He returned to Cape Coast and took over from Rev. Dr. Thompson, a one-time Dean of Education at Cambridge who came to Ghana as a Wesleyan missionary. J.E.J. Capitein and Anton Amo trained in Holland and Germany respectively. Capitein returned to the Gold Coast and was stationed at Elmina where he preached the Gospel and taught at the Castle school.

By introducing literacy the early educators helped to create the necessary atmosphere for the development of literature. It is obvious that without literacy there could be no written literature. In addition, the indigenous society was made aware of the numerous opportunities that western-style education offered. The few literate Ghanaians at that time, Philip Quarcoo, for example, enjoyed tremendous privileges. Members of the educated elite functioned as the lay preachers, translators and low-key administrators. Early educational activities were restricted to the castles. In 1735, Frederick Pedersen Svanne, a Basel missionary, began a short-lived ministry at Christianborg. Another Christian mission, the Moravian church group sponsored Rev. Christian Protten to do Christian work along the Accra coast in 1736 and 1769-1770. But these efforts yielded little results.

Various Christian denominations became active in Ghana from the beginning of the nineteenth century. In order to propagate their doctrines the missions instituted a number of ventures, many of which became vital for the development of written literature in Ghana. The early missionaries emphasised the acquisition of literacy as a major requirement to become a Christian because they saw education as a means of spreading Chritianity. The connection between literacy and missionary work was stressed by Elias Schrenk:

> If we had a nation with formal education, able to write, my plans for missionary work would be different. But now I am convinced that the opening of schools is our main task. I have a low opinion of Christians who are not able to read their Bible.[10]

Also a report by the Basel mission, published around 1850, emphasized its commitment to

> train God-fearing young men from among the congregations as teachers and catechists. They [the local converts] should have the necessary gifts and a decent primary school standard.[11]

The converts were taught to read the Bible and the best pupils became teachers and catechists. By the mid-nineteenth century, the highest educational institutions in Ghana were the Basel catechist schools at Akropong and Osu.

Not surprisingly, the curriculum was based on Christian teaching. Some of the subjects taught at the lower levels were local Ghanaian languages, English, History from Alexander the Great to Napoleon, Playing the Harmonium, and Bible studies. The following courses were taught in the seminary: English, Greek, Hebrew, Church History, Exegesis, Ethics, and Teaching methods. Accordingly, teaching was "given a scriptural tone" (Odamtten, 106). Odamtten gives one illustration of this point. In the mission school, "a nature study lesson on Flowers, for instance, must refer to man as a flower that flourisheth and is cut away" (Odamtten, 106).

The development of written literature is linked to the evangelistic programs of the Christian churches. According to Obiechina,

> The need for Christian missions to spread Christianity as well as civilization was of

> immense significance to the growth of written literature in West Africa. (68)

The missionaries launched programs in literacy and also sought to make basic reading texts available. They

> regarded the provision of schools as part of their principal aim of evangelisation and of bringing about a change in the way of life of the converts and making them adopt the Christian way, as the missionaries knew and understood it.[12]

As well, the missionaries thought it necessary to learn local languages and to provide basic religious texts.

> To facilitate their evangelical aspirations, the early missionaries had of necessity to learn the West African vernaculars and to reduce them to writing; they translated the Bible, hymn books and other religious works into the vernaculars and taught West Africans to read and write so that they would avail themselves of the Christian message embodied in the translated texts. (Obiechina, 68)

However, it would be incorrect to assume that the various Christian denominations had a uniform language policy. There were differences in the programs implemented. The Basel and Bremen missions came from Switzerland and Germany, resectively, where the Reformation began. One of the major tenets of the Reformation movement was the reading of the Bible in local languages. There was therefore a high sense of commitment among the Bremen and Basel missionaries to teach the scriptures in local languages. According to Derbrunner,

> The Basel mission had acquired by the end of the century a most remarkable knowledge of the Ga and Twi languages. No missionary was allowed to marry who had not proved by a strict examination his proficiency in the vernacular. (251)

The Breman group were equally dedicated in their efforts to learn Ewe:

> Bremen missionaries came to know the Ewe language, culture and religion, translating the Bible and building up a most elaborate and complete school and church literature in Ewe. (Derbrunner, 251)

In contrast, there was less enthusiasm among the Wesleyans to learn and teach local languages. It is true that that Wesleyans were late in establishing programs for the study of Fante because the mission concentrated in Cape Coast, an area where English was fairly well known by a few educated Fantes. But it is very significant that the Wesleyan group came from Victorian England where English was seen as the language for Christian religion and civilization. For the Wesleyans there was little eagerness to acquire knowledge of Fante and it was much later before they embarked on teaching local languages. Thus it is not surprising that in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Wesleyan mission produced fewer books in local languages than did the Basel or Bremen missions. Because of these differences in policies, Ewe and Akwapim

Akan literatures, which were produced under the auspices of the Bremen and Basel missions respectively, were far more numerous than Fante literature which was produced under the influence of the Wesleyans.

Perhaps, more than any other factor, the introduction of the Roman alphabet provided the strongest impetus for the growth of literature in Africa. The missionaries devised scripts for writing in local languages and they taught reading and writing, the prerequisites for the development of literature. The most vital contributions of the Christian missions, as measured by Obiechina, were

> in the introduction of the Western script with [its] demographic appeal and greater diffusional facility into West Africa [which] made the spread of popular literacy and the consequence of written literature possible. (58)

The process of literary and literacy development in Ghana began at a time when there were serious efforts to find keys for recording African languages in the Latin script. A number of programs were tested, the first of which was the application of orthographic rules based on the various Indo-European (IE) language systems to the local African, usually, the languages spoken by the missionaries and the colonial administrators. However, the application of the Indo-European language rules in Africa "led to a multiplicity of writing systems, particularly as so many African peoples were divided into 'spheres' of influence of the different missions".[13] and colonial administrations. For example, there were two varied orthographic renderings of the Ewe language by the Bremens and the Catholics. Each mission devised rules to suit the Ewe dialect spoken in the area under its control. Unfortunately the different orthographical expressions aggravated the dialectal division among Ewes, particularly between the Anglo and Ho people.

The second experiment involved the application of Dr. R. Lepsius' Standard Alphabet. In 1854, Dr. Lepsius, a Berlin professor, devised a system for reducing unwritten languages and foreign graphics/characters to a uniform orthography in European letters. Lepsius's program superseded the IE rules and was applied to unify the dialectal divergences within the same language system.

The search for an appropriate linguistic system continued into the twentieth century when a third program, the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), principles were adopted and substituted for the IE language and Lepsius systems. The IPA program was devised by D. Westermann and I.C. Ward in conjuction with a group of linguists at the International African Institute, London. Its principles were stated in "Practical Orthography of Languages," a paper which was published in Memoradum I IPA (London, 1927). The IPA program "helped to express particular features of African vernaculars, especially phonetic features" (Zima, 217). However, the attempts to represent the "phonetic features" of the language generated a special set of problems. Firstly, because of the dialectal variety within some language systems it has been difficult to establish acceptable phonetic features. Secondly, when the phonetic principle is applied the stress falls on special characters which might be different from the diacritics in the IE languages. Improvised solutions such as denoting tones with special indicators (Ga or Ewe) are not satisfactory to all. Thirdly, there is the problem of finding type-prints for peculiar characters in the local language.

Linguists, administrators and others involved in communication are still grappling with the problem of orthography. The Vernacular Literature Bureau, for example adopted two versions of Twi (Akwapim-Twi and Asante-Twi) for its publications. The different spellings of names and words are acceptable. (For example the name Kwame may be spelled Kwami or Komi). Several dialects of Ewe are used simultaneously on the national radio. The Bureau of Ghana languages, School of Ghana languages and other institutions and individuals continue to search for answers to these linguistic problems.

The dialectal problems and the difficulties of applying Latin script to local languages have not prevented the missionaries and others who write in Ghanaian languages from realizing their objectives. The use of the Roman alphabet for writing African languages made it possible for the missionaries to teach the Bible in local languages.

Obiechina re-affirms the major impact of the development of writing in African languages:

> The introduction of the western script with its democratic appeal, however, ushered West Africa into the main stream tradition by making available the most efficient medium for the production of literature and a most highly developed means of communication among the largest possible number of people. (66-67)

Once they made progress with writing in local languages, the missionaries intensified their efforts at propagating Christian literature. A pattern developed which was repeated in many parts of Africa:

> The missionaries learned the indigenous languages, reduced them to writing, taught their early reading and writing, and then translated and printed scriptural material.[14]

As early as 1865, E. Schrenk, a missionary, testified before a British Parliamentary Committee that most of the religious teachers in Ghana spoke local languages in order to translate the Bible into Ga and Akan. Schrenk also claimed that school text books were printed in these two languages.

Obiechina establishes an analogy between the activities of the Christian missionaries in Africa and the Church in Europe in the Middle Ages.

> The growth of written literature in West Africa has followed the same pattern as in medieval (or earlier) Europe. In either case, we notice the introduction of an alphabetic script by the Christian missionaries through

> a formal, literary education, followed by the writing down of the vernaculars and their being used (side by side with cosmopolitan languages) to produce written literature. (Obiechina, 77)

All over Africa the missions sponsored projects for the production of Christian literature. In Ghana John Bunyan's Christian classic The Pilgrim's Progress was translated into Akwapim-Twi, Fante, Ga and Ewe.

Some of the missionaries, especially those who were educated in European language and scholarly traditions made major individual contributions to the development of literary activities in Ghana. Rev. Dr. Thompson, who served in Ghana around the mid-nineteenth century, was a Dean of Education at Cambridge University. Schlegel, Zimmerman, Westermann and Christaller were linguistic specialists. As well, there were a number of educated Ghanaians who carried out linguistic research. Christaller has written about the valuable contributions of his local assistants.

> The further advantage of the assistance of young intelligent Natives, who in the missionary schools had received a valuable amount of instruction in England as well as attempts of writing of their own language; with them he [the missionary] could proceed to translation work, discussing every difficulty and obscurity that presented itself in the native or in English and Bible languages.[15]

Christaller himself employed a Ghanaian, Jonathan Bekoe Palmer, in 1864 to write down local historical tradition and notes about religious events.

The missionaries provided avenues for the dissemination of literature. They established book depots, published church newspapers and formed Christian Literature Committees. As well, the missionaries created the appropriate environment for the growth of Ghanaian literature. They directed projects for the translation of classical works into local languages and for the recording of local lore. The mission schools educated and trained Ghanaians (mostly men) in literacy, and in classical and Christian literature. They provided the impetus for the emergence of religious and morally edifying works. Also, because the mssionaries concentrated on educating boys, almost all of the early Ghanaian writers were males. It was much later before women writers were to emerge, by which time the colonial administration and the Ghana Government under Nkrumah assumed major roles in education. Mabel Casely-Hayford, Efua Sutherland and Ama Ata Aidoo were among the first female Ghanaian writers.

Publishing

Until quite recently the oral medium was the only available means for artistic expression or intellectual discourse. This medium was used by classical poets such as

Homer and it has remained the chief means of communication in Africa and other parts of the world. Such a definition of the oral tradition, of course, includes surrogate languages.

> If publishing, in the wider sense, is taken to mean the dissemination of information by any appropriate medium, then the history of publishing too has followed a consistent pattern of development in the various regions of the world. Thus the first indigenous publishers in all pre-literate societies employed the oral medium, with voice surrogates such as the drum and the horn.[16]

However, publishing is now conventionally regarded as a province of print.

Publishing: Early Newspapers

In Ghana, the first major outlet for the dissemination of writing was newspapers. Although very few of the early newspapers published any literary works their most significant contribution to the development of Ghanaian literature was the fact that their presses were available and that they were the fora for the few educated Ghanaians to develop their ideas and writings. K.A.B. Jones-Quartey maintains that the first newspaper in Ghana was The Royal Gold Coast Gazette which was established in Gold Coast in April 1822 by Charles MacCarthy, the first Crown Governor of the Gold Coast.[17] This newspaper was modelled after The Sierra Leone Royal Gazette after MacCarthy brought the master printer of the Sierra Leone newspaper to launch The Royal Gold Coast Gazette. The Gold Coast Gazette dealt with subjects such as the slave trade (February 11, 1823), education in Cape Coast and Accra (May 14, 1823), and also economic opportunities in the Gold Coast. The Royal Gold Coast Gazette folded after MacCarthy's death in a war against the Ashantis. Although it did not have a direct impact on the development of literature, the publication of The Gold Coast Gazette served as an example to educated Ghanaians of how they could communicate effectively.

Nearly three decades after the failure of The Gold Coast Gazette, Charles Bannerman launched the first indigenously owned newspaper with a paltry sum of about ninety shillings and a lot of determination. In a circular soliciting funding (July 11, 1859) which he forwarded to the office of the Secretary of State for the Colonies Bannerman gave an account of the state of The West African Herald and his personal commitment:

> My object in establishing this paper was to communicate to the world authentic intelligence respecting Western Africa, of which I am a native .... Patience, and a firm determination to succeed in spite of all the obstacles have enabled me at length to succeed the "West African Herald" on a firm footing. The subscribers in Africa now amount to three hundred and ten of whom about two-thirds are native. As my means are very small, and serious difficulties still exist, I beg to solicit your assistance in the shape of small contributions to a fund I am endeavoring to raise for the purpose of rendering my printing establishment more efficient, and otherwise adding to the size and general usefulness of the West African Herald.[18]

This letter shows that Bannerman was much aware of the power of the written word; he wished to use his newspaper to win respect for his compatriots. It was not totally surprising that the Crown gave no support to Bannerman since it was considered that the Herald was fomenting pro-nationalist aspirations in the Gold Coast. Bannerman continued publishing his newspaper and was later joined by his brother Edmund. By the time the Herald "died" in 1873, it had made its mark as a watch-dog for the interests of the local people.

Bannerman mentioned two major components which are basic to the development of the book industry: printing and readership. He appealed for funding in order to make the printing of his newspaper efficient. It is not clear whether or not printing instead of handwriting was first used to produce the Herald. These details are yet to be discovered. Jones-Quartey and Yankey give different versions of the history of early printing in the Gold Coast. According to Jones-Quartey,

> It was the Royal Gold Coast Gazette and Commercial Intelligencer that was in fact the first paper to have been established and printed in Ghana; and it was produced at Cape Coast.[19]

Jones-Quartey insists that "a full printing and functional printing press had existed and had had a thirty-five year-old history by 1859" (Jones-Quartey, 37). Yankey also makes the following statement:

> Information gathered so far appears to suggest that the earliest known printing with single types must have begun in the then Gold Coast in 1859. Apparently, printing that was done up to 1874 was characterized by the production of newspapers and periodicals only. But, unfortunately, as specimens cannot be found, it is hard to comment on quality of printing and also determine what type of machines and equipment were used.[20]

It is probable that Yankey was not aware of Jones-Quartey's History, Politics and Early Press in Ghana (1975) when he wrote his article in 1978. The availability of the machinery and technology for printing helped in the effective dissemination of writing. The establishment of many Ghanaian owned newspapers toward the end of the nineteenth century is a major outcome of this development.

There is a fairly long list of the newspaper attempts during the last three decades of the 19th and early decades of the 20th centuries. For example, the Ghanaian nationalist, James Hutton Brew's newspaper The Gold Coast Times was printed from 1874. Brew published a second newspaper, Western Echo, (November 1885 - December 1887) with his nephew Casely-Hayford as assistant editor. Many short-lived newspapers were also printed: The Gold Coast Aborigines' Right Society, which was established by Attoh-Ahumah, Egyir Asaam and Mensah-Sarbah survived for a couple of years. Other newspapers, such as Gold Coast Leader (1902 - 1933/4) which was founded by Casely-Hayford who was joined by Attoh-Ahumah, Gaddiel Acquah and Kobina Sekyi, were issues-oriented.

Newspaper and book publishing are related industries because similar technology is used to produce books and newspapers. As a result of printing newspapers over the decades, Ghanaians acquired some of the basic technical skills for publishing books. The direct link between printing and publishing can be appreciated when, for instance, one examines the history of the Ghana Publishing Corporation (GPC), one of the major publishers of Ghanaian literature. The colonial administration imported a printing machine for use in producing official documents in 1874. It was installed at Cape Coast but was moved to Accra (Christianborg Castle) a year later. The printing department increased in size and gained respect for its quality products. Later, it was was moved to new premises and named Victoriaborg Press. This press experienced a number of developments, including the acquisition of monotype machines and the installation of high speed printing machines in 1932. Today the Victoriaborg Press constitutes one of the printing departments of the Ghana Publishing Corporation.

Another major requirement for the development of publishing is the availability of readers and writers. Without these, it would have been hardly possible to maintain a publishing industry. It appears that by the end of the nineteenth century there was a small number of educated people residing in towns like Cape Coast, Accra, Akropong and Ho. It is logical to assume that the early newspapers had regular readers. As a matter of fact there were over 300 subscribers to The West African Herald by 1859. The readership of the early newspapers and the number of educated people in the Gold Coast would have increased substantially by the twentieth century. This pool of readers would have included potential Ghanaian writers and some of the functionaries of the colonial administration.

Publishing: Christian Missions

The Christian missions must be credited for their persistent effort to develop literacy, to produce reading texts and to sustain general interest in reading and writing. Indeed, it was mainly through the efforts of the church bodies that the book industry made its real impact in Africa as a whole. In his article "The African Publisher," Abiola Irele, a Nigerian critic, makes the following statement:

> The book made its impact in Africa largely through the influence of the Christian presses .... The emergent African elite, particularly in West Africa, not only received an education -- and with it a new language -- from missionaries, but also the technical means of expression in a large scale made possible by the associated arts of printing and publishing.[21]

By developing orthographies and by implementing literacy and literary programs, the church missions laid the foundation for the publishing of Ghanaian (African) literature. Initially the missionaries were mostly engaged in translating the Bible, hymn books and catechisms. Later they promoted the translation of classical works into local languages and also encouraged or fostered the writing of reports on local culture and events.

Most locally written these books were published in Europe, but the missionaries were also successful in producing books on the church printing presses that were established in Accra, Akropong and Cape Coast. Examples are J.D. Russell's Fanti-English Dictionary (Cape Coast: Wesleyan Book Depot, 1910); E. Nothawng's A Short History of the Akropong Basel Mission Senior School Established, 1867 (Akropong: Basel Mission, 1917); Samuel Henry Brew's Practical Fanti (Cape Coast: Wesleyan Book Depot, 1917); and Michael Dei-Anang's Cocoa Comes to Mampong (Cape Coast: Methodist Book Depot, 1949); Kwabena Nketia's Awonsem 1944 - 1949 (Cape Coast: Methodist Book Depot, 1952) and Akwansosem bi (Some Travel Tales) (Accra: Scottish Mission Book Depot, 1953) and G.N. Safo's Afrakoma (Accra: Scottish Mission Book Depot, 1955). Examples of the books on Ghana published at the headquarters of the Christian mission's are P.E. Riebstein's Eléments de grammaire Ewé (1928) which was published in Holland by Mission Catholique Steyl and Johann Gottlieb Christaller's A Grammar of Asante and Fante Language Called Tshi (Chwee, Twi) Based on the Akwapim Dialect which was first published in Basel by the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society (1875). Some European publishers who had no direct link with missionary activities published works on Ghana. A Berlin publisher, D. Reimer produced Deidrich Hermanna Westermann's Evefaifa (Teaching Eve) in 1928 and the Oxford University Press published M.B. Wilkie's Ga Grammar, Notes and Exercises in 1930.

The missions took local publishing seriously and worked to make it a viable activity. The Wesleyan mission achieved the most success in this endeavour. According to Amu Djoleto and K. Nimako, Director and Deputy Director, respectively, of the Ghana Book Development Council (GBDC), the Wesleyan mission established a printing press at Cape Coast by 1851 and granted the Basel mission regular access to that facility. Later, in 1910, the Basel mission managed to acquire its own printing press. Very often these facilities were centralized with the printing and distribution taking place within the same establishment such as the case of the Methodist Book Depot at Cape Coast.

As the Christian publishing houses in Ghana increased their production, they began to accept non-religious texts. In publishing secular literature Christian book depots were also responding to changes in the writing and reading habits of the society. At present the Christian publishing houses in Ghana routinely produce secular works. For instance, Waterville Publishing House which prints and sells its books through the Presbyterian Book Depot in Accra regularly publishes secular literature.[22]

The Christian missions established agencies in most of the major cities and maintained mobile units of buses, cars, bicycles, and head portage to sell books in the rural areas. Also, churches and missions were the major sales outlets. By establishing publishing and distribution houses in Ghana the missionaries also helped to train local Ghanaians in the book industry. It is a mark of their lasting achievement that the church book depots have remained major publishers and have fared very well in competition with both local and foreign publishers in Ghana. With their major involvement in developing writing, training readers and potential writers, and in providing facilities for the production of books, the Christian missions have made a significant contribution to Ghanaian literature.

Publishing in the Post-Independence Era

Changes in the political economy since the end of the Second World War has determined new directions of publishing in Ghana. While mass action and public protests in defiance of colonial authority were occuring, Nkrumah, a leader of the nationalist movement, became convinced that the struggle for self-determination should take place in culture as well. He defined the movement for independence as a challenge of western domination in Africa's political, economic, cultural and intellectual life.

Nkrumah implemented policies and established institutions to help in the development and expansion of education and literacy. He instituted The Accelerated Development Plan (1951), The Educational Act (1961) and The

Free Text Book Scheme (1963). There was a great increase in enrollment in schools and consequently there was a great demand for reading materials. Nkrumah's government sought to meet the immediate need for texts by relying on overseas publishers like Longman, Macmillan, Oxford University Press, London University Press, Cambridge University Press, Thomas Nelson, and Evans Brothers. Some of the bookstores established by the missionaries (especially, the Presbyterian and Methodist book depots) also engaged in retail operations and the supply of school textbooks.

Meanwhile, Nkrumah developed local publishing institutions and cultural centres to increase the production of literature locally in order to reduce and eventually eliminate the heavy dependence on overseas publishers for the supply of textbooks. Under his administration, the Vernacular Literature Bureau, which was established by the Colonial Government primarily to promote literacy in local languages, was restructured and renamed the Bureau of Ghana Languages (BGL, 1951). This body has developed into the major publisher of literature in Ghanaian languages. Nkrumah's government also established the Ghana Publishing Corporation (GPC) in 1965 to produce books for schools, colleges, and the general public, and for export. GPC had a printing press at Tema and distribution depots in Accra. With the full operation of this publishing corporation it was possible to meet demands in primary schools, although secondary and tertiary institutions still depended on foreign publishers. Books published by the GPC were made available to primary and middle school children for free. Whenever the volume of work was beyond the capacity of the GPC, the government would contract out to local and foreign publishers. The increase in Ghanaian literature from the mid-1960's is a direct outcome of these publishing and and educational programs initiated by Nkrumah.

Changes in government policies affected the book industry. Before 1966, there was an Open General License (OGL) granted to book sellers to import books for secondary and technical schools. But the OGL was severely restricted following the overthrow of Nkrumah. In the 1970's the OGL was replaced with another scheme whereby special import licences were granted to a few book sellers to import certain books for sale to schools. This policy frustrated booksellers as their businesses were now controlled by the Ministry of Trade and the Bank of Ghana. In 1976, the ruling body of Ghana, the Supreme Military Council launched the Ghana Investment Policy Decree (GIPD) to stimulate the growth of local industries, including publishing. The terms of this decree included a ban on foreign companies which prevented them from engaging in publishing and distributing books in Ghana. As a result, many foreign publishers in Ghana transferred or sold their asserts to local Ghanaian entrepreneurs.

The impact of GIPD on publishing in Ghana is not clear, but Djoleto maintains that

> Of the several new publishing houses that were set up as a result of the Ghana Investment Policy (1976), which indigenized, among other things, the publishing industry of Ghana, only three (Edupress, Sedco and Adwinsa) have made a considerable impact on the country's publishing scene.[23]

Generally, there has been a downward trend in publishing in Ghana since the late 1970's. For example, the BGL produced 42 titles in 1978, 12 in 1979 and 10 in 1982. Nimako, the Deputy Director of GBDC, has also expressed concern about the decline in publishing in Ghana. Between 1978 and 1982, only 224 books in total were published in Ghana.[24] Nimako has attributed the decline in publishing to the following factors: the lack of trained expertise; lack of capital; import dificulties and markets, government policies and language difficulties. In order to fully appreciate the contributions of the various local publishing houses to Ghanaian literature it is necessary to consider some of these problems endured by the book industry.

General Problems of the Book Industry in Ghana

The odds against the publisher in Ghana (and other African countries) are so overwhelming that it should be a great surprise for the casual observer that any book at all is produced there. Even for some Ghanaians who are involved in book production, local publishing can be depressing. Recalling his experience with trying to get some of his manuscripts published in Ghana, Atukwei Okai, the president of the Ghana Association of Writers (GAW), makes the following statements:

> If you [the writer] set out to print anything on your own the printing cost will stagger you. If you manage to print, the distribution difficulties will blow your mind. If you give your stuff to a local publisher you will sympathise so much with his problems that you may not write again. So all our best works ... appear abroad first to an audience which either regards us with quaint interest, like some glass-enclosed specimen whose every development should be noted and analysed ... or like an exotic weed to be sampled and made a conversation piece .... Or else we become some international organisation's pet, fed and caressed and then let loose among our people as protectors of granaries whence emanated our substance.[25]

In spite of his frustrations with local publishing, it is on record that all of Okai's major works (including Lorgorligi Lorgarisms and Oath To Fromtomfrom) have been published in Ghana by the GPC.

The difficulties expressed by Okai cannot be trivialised. The teething problems of the book industry in Ghana are aggravated by a combination of cultural and economic factors which hinder the various stages of production, distribution and marketing. These problems, as some experts explain, are routine in the African book industry. In Publishing and Book Development in Africa: A Bibliography, Hans Zell identifies many of the factors that impede the book industry on the continent.

> Publishing and book development in Africa must of course be seen and interpreted against a background of several social infrastructural elements, a small per-capita

> income in most countries, a diversity of languages, a low rate of literacy, an insufficient number of retail outlets, frequently high customs tariffs on essential printing equipment and other obstacles, some of near impossible dimensions.[26]

However, he acknowledges,

> despite the many problems facing the African book industries, there is no doubt that over the past decade [the 1970's] indigenous publishing has become an established reality in many parts of Africa.(Zell, 1)

In his own study of publishing in Ghana, Kotei (*The Book Today in Africa*, 1981) also identifies some of the major factors that afffect this industry: the state of the political economy; the internal organisation of the publishing enterprise, distribution; market; language and copyright.

Production Problems:

Economic and Political Issues, and Technology

The accent on national political economy as a key factor in determining growth in the book industry is valid since publishing is a capital intensive industry which requires, among other things, the procurement of vital equipment from overseas. Simply put, a poor political economy will stifle growth in this industry. Since Ghana's independence there have been three governments by elections, five governments by coup d'etat and at least two dozen failed attempts to unseat various governments. These political upheavals and convolutions have been disruptive in many sectors.

The negative impacts of political adventurisms and these so-called "revolutions" have been deepened by other problems such as the high cost of western technology, high oil prices, poor international pricing of Ghana's commodities for export (cocoa and cola), misappropriation of state money, poor managament, and ad hoc and unsustained economic programs. Every aspect of life in this country has been gravely affected by its poor economy. It is needless to mention that for a country struggling to keep afloat, books and the publishing industry in general would be relegated to a low level in national priorities.

By its very setup, the book industry requires major investment initially in order to procure equipment and material and also regular financial support to maintain equipment and to ensure a continuous supply of essentials such as paper, ink and ribbons. But investment in this industry has been slow. Financiers have been tentative or not forthcoming at all. Because of Ghana's volatile economic and political climate most investors have been interested in enterprises that yield quick financial returns rather than businesses that require long term, continuous support. The banks and other financial institutions have followed the trend of financing speculative business in what is referred to as "buying and selling". For their part the governments of Ghana have been involved in price controls and taxes, mostly regulatory capacities such as imposition of tarifs on both imported and locally produced goods.

Even when capital is raised there is no guarantee that publishers will be able to procure equipment, since they must first secure foreign exchange allocation and also arrange for letters of credit. Quite literally, many publishers have not been able to make it past the receptionist's desk at the central bank, The Bank of Ghana, where foreign exchange applications are processed.

Next, the local Ghanaian publisher must deal with reluctant overseas suppliers who are nervous about sending supplies to countries with balance of payment problems. Due to the lack of foreign exchange Ghanaian publishers have not been not able to take advantage of new technologies for publishing. The advent of new computers has enabled publishers to engage in desk-top publishing. However, these technologies are capital intensive and demand training in the use of new equipment which must be maintained regularly. Moreover, the new equipment is very costly.

Because it is underfinanced, the book industry is not able to attract or retain experts. Instead individual publishers offer "on-the-job" training to their workers (mostly elementary, secondary and technical school graduates) in operating their equipment. Vital jobs in the book industry such as editing and accounting which are not readily judged as financially rewarding, are neglected. On the whole there is a shortage of trained and experienced editors, graphic artists and illustrators, distributors and marketing professionals. Nor is much consideration given to good financial management which is a requirement for any high quality book production.

Recently, however, there have been some efforts to develop programs for book production. The Ghana Book Development Council (GBDC) has been organizing seminars in book production and marketing. Also, in 1983, the University of Science and Technology (UST), Kumasi began a degree program in Book Industry with assistance from GBDC and UNESCO. UST already has strength in various aspects of publishing since its Department of Design and General Arts Studies has emphasis on Graphics, Design and Printing. New courses in publishing, printing and marketing have been added. It is anticipated that publishers from Ghana and also neighbouring countries will employ many of the graduates of the UST Book Industry program. As well as insufficient finance and lack of requisite manpower Ghanaian, publishers must deal with problems concerning language, contracts with writers, poor ditribution networks, untested markets and undefined reading habits. In addition the local book industry faces competition from foreign competitors who have limitless resources.

Other Problems of Production: Manuscripts, Language and Copyright

Manuscripts

It is difficult for Ghanaian publishers to set their goals and to meet deadlines let alone to serve the interest of their number one constituency, writers and readers. The frustration expressed by Okai regarding the book industry is general. It reflects the predicament of many Ghanaian publishers, writers and readers. Undue delays in publishing manuscripts, poor quality prints, lack of reasonable compensation and lack of good promotion are some of the reasons why many leading Ghanaian authors regularly publish their work abroad. Foreign publishers offer royalties in dollars and pounds instead of cedis. Then there is the "prestige" of having been "published abroad". Moreover, these authors have established good working relationships with the foreign publishers and see no reason to change that. Unfortunately, the difficulty local publishers have in attracting top rate manuscripts is likely to continue.

Language

African publishers, like writers, must deal with the problem of language for African writing. As Hans Zell points out,

> One of [the] fundamental issues, for publishers and writers alike, is the question of language. It is something that has

> occupied an important position in the continuing debate about the role of the African writer.[27]

What are the financial rewards for publishing in an African language? What would be the real incentive to motivate the publisher to publish in an indigenous language? Going by what Zell describes as "the publishing realities of producing literature in Africa,"

> It would seem that a decision to publish creative writing in one of the indigenous African languages will have to be prompted more by nationalistic rather than commercial considerations.[28]

Even an African classic like Things Fall Apart, though a huge success in English, "proved," in the words of Henry Chakawa, the Heinemann representative in Nairobi, "commercially unsuccessful"[29] when published in a Luganda translation. Such is the argument against publishing in local languages.

Some critics claim that the financial incentives for publishing in local languages are almost non-existent. In her article "The Book Industry in Africa 1973-83: A Decade of Development," Eva M. Rathgeber makes the following statements:

> The market for most indigenous [African] languages titles is small. The book buying capability of the rural poor, who would be a potential market, is limited; disposable income is scare and books are bought only for educational or other specifically utilitarian purposes .... The bulk of the African book market still lies in educational publishing.

> Since education beyond the primary, or sometimes secondary, level is usually in English, French or Portuguese. The profitability of indigenous language publishing is further reduced. In Africa, the emphasis has been more on the development of indigenous publishing houses rather than on publishing in indigenous languages.[30]

Writing specifically about the book industry in Ghana, Djoleto maintains:

> In publishing, profitability which in turn depends on potential market size, is a crucial factor in determining whether or not to publish, and this is why the ordinary Ghanaian publishing firm has not published much in local languages. In terms of population and the national literary rate of 40 - 50 per cent, only Akan, Ewe, possibly Ga or Dangme could sustain print runs of up to 75,00 copies over a five year period for a best seller in Ghana. (Djoleto, 85)

The publisher in indigenous languages faces risks in a terribly restricted market size. Moreover, there is an absence of newspapers and magazines in local languages to promote the sale of books.

When they produce books in local languages publishers must deal with technical problems such as those of orthography and finding appropriate fonts for printing in local languages:

> While the linguists were contending with questions of acceptable orthographies for multiple languages and dialects, the printers were trying to find typographic solutions to the best way of representing the peculiar sound system of African languages. The problem was that the Roman alphabets contained in printers's font did not have the diacritics which were needed to indicate the

> tonal variations typical of many languages; especially the Kwa tone languages of West Africa. (Kotei, The Book Today, 133)

According to Kotei:

> One solution was to spell words by using approximate sounds, eg, the letter 'e' instead of 'i' but this created serious ambiguities. Early translations of the Bible were full of such ambiguities, making whole sentences and verses meaningless. In secular literature, these ambiguities slowed reading speed to the extent that both the enjoyment and appreciation of vernacular literature was hampered. (Kotei, The Book Today, 146)

However, it should not be assumed that publishing in local languages is impossible to accomplish. As a matter of fact there are numerous successful titles and writers in local languages. Ghanaian writers like Alhajj Umar and F.K. Fiawoo who wrote in Hausa and Ewe, respectively, have achieved national recognition. Local publishers like BGL and Waterville which specialize in producing books in local languages have been as successful as any other publishers including the foreign firms in Ghana.

Similar arguments can be made about writing in the local languages of other African countries. In Kenya, Ngugi's writings in Gikuyu, for example, Matigari, Caitaani Mutharaba-ini (Devil on the Cross) and Ngaahika Ndeenda (I Will Marry When I Want, co-written with Ngugi Wa Mirii), have been very successful. The first print of Caitaani Mutharaba-ini was sold in weeks. Thomas Mofolo's Chaka was originally written in a Sesotho language and then translated into English (1931, by the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures), French (1940) and German (1974). Sierra Leonean dramatists, Dele Charley and Pat Maddy (both Krio), enjoy great followings in their country. The Yoruba writer, D.O. Fanguwa achieved recognition as a major Nigerian writer (as well as African writer). But, it must not be misconstrued that these major achievements in writing or publishing in local languages, impressive as they seem, mean that the obstacles to producing books in local languages have been eliminated. Certainly not. These singular achievements are testimonies that it is not impossible to write or publish successfully in local languages.

Copyright

Ghanaian publishers, like all others, must observe copyright regulations. Original works by Ghanaian artists are protected under the Copyright Act of 1961 which has been drawn in accordance with the International Copyright regulations. So far most of the violations of copyright regulations have occured in music, rather than publishing.

Distribution

Ghanaian publishers have difficulties with distribution within the country including the moving of moving books from warehouses to depots/stores. The Post and Telecommunication

Service is slow and unreliable and so most of the publishers distribute books directly to their clients.

The distribution of books between African states, even within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), has also been beset with problems such as the lack of transportation, customs duties and foreign exchange regulations. However, a few Ghanaian publishers, for example, GPC and Astab, Ghana, have opened branches in neighbouring states. The Sales and Distribution Divisions of the GPC have had minor success in the potentially large West African book market. Astab, Ghana, recently opened a branch in the Gambia.

Marketing

Effective distribution networks are only one of the conditions necessary for bringing books to readers. The efficacy of the book market in Ghana is also based on the existence of vital marketing strategies and good pricing policies.

The few channels for advertising books by Ghanaians include publications such as The Ghana National Bibliography (Ghana Library Board), Ghana Book World (GBDC), "The Weekly Spectator" and "The Mirror" (Ghanaian Weekly papers), The African Book World and Press: A Directory (Zell and Bundy), and African Books in Print and African Publisher Record (Zell). There is no up to date annual catalogue of books in print on Ghana.

Many of the companies devise unconventional means for marketing their books. The Christian publishing houses in particular maintain an effective network using cars, bicycles and head portage. Others sell their books in department stores, through street vendors and general traders. For instance, the list of outlets for the sale of C. Wontewe and G.N. Haick's A Spell of Love and The Crab Division (Accra Talisman Publishers) included Speedy Variety, Kingsway, Multi Stores, and also vendors at Opera, Lido, and Orion cinema theatres.

In Ghana, the price of books is set by the publisher but must be approved by the Prices and Incomes Board. The publisher has to take into consideration the cost of production and the need for profit. Pricing is affected by the value of the cedi on the international foreign exchange market, excise duty and taxation. High taxation and other expenses inflate the price of books. Then there are other expenses such as publishers concessions to book sellers and reviewers. Most large scale publishers are able to absorb these extra expenses which are a necessary part of the business, but for small-scale operations even minor discounts mean imbalanced accounts. Thus by the time the book gets to the reader, the cost is multiplied many times, making it difficult for the low-income Ghanaian to buy it.

Readership: Cost of Books and Reading Habits

Readers constitute the primary clientele of the book industry, yet the relation between readers and the publishing industry has been taken for granted. Apart from a few studies (for instance research by Kotei and Twumasi on reading habits, which was commissioned by the GBDC) there has been no considerable research on the attitudes and readings habit of Ghanaians. As well, the economic, educational, social and cultural factors which affect the book industry have not been sufficiently examined.

Some of the major obstacles faced by of the book market are low per capita income, a low literacy rate, an educational system which encourages utilitarian attitudes to books, and social and cultural factors which generally prevent the situation from improving. Though statistics about sales figures are important the reseacher should not make a fetish out of them. It is necessary to test the extent to which each of the aforementioned factors affect the market. For example, in spite of the low per capita income and low literacy rate, publishers of popular literature have always done well. Also, the rate of circulation of books in libraries alone is not sufficient to measure the number of people who read a particular book. Besides, it must be noted that the actual sales figures do not always reflect the number of people who have read that text. Often a single copy of a text is read by many people.

> Reading is wider than suspected. However, the range of choice is very limited. In Kotei and Twumasi, only about 30.7% obtained their books from public libraries; the majority complained that their books were "tired", "outdated", "worn out", "pages had been torn out", etc. Those who prefer to buy their own books complained about the high cost. Consequently, the tendency now is for habitual readers to borrow from among a circle of friends. (Kotei, The Book Today, 163)

A visit to any newstand at Lido or Opera Square, Accra, would reveal the great demand for reading materials. Readers in Ghana, like readers elsewhere, read texts that are accessible and affordable. They buy newspapers, sports publications, popular magazines, serialised texts, novellas and popular literature.

In western countries people are often barraged with unsolicited texts ('junk mail') by advertisers. Much of this mail is unopened, unread and summarily discarded. There is a feeling of fatigue or even irritation at being overwhelmed by over-zealous sales people. In Ghana, because there is a scarcity of reading materials, people read anything they can lay their hands upon.

Thus it would seem that the question as to whether Ghanaians (Africans) read is not easily answered. Such an inquiry ignores the great demand for reading material for "popular" literature and can only be construed as an investigation into the reading habits of educated Ghanaians. Consequently the response "Ghanaians are utilitarian readers" must be considered in relation to the reading habits of the "educated" people.

The assumption that Ghanaians read for only utilitarian reasons has been behind the call for reform in school curricula in order to teach students to read from a wide variety of texts rather than from their required reading texts only. The West African Examination Council General Certificate Examination is based on standardised texts for students in Ghana, Nigeria, Gambia, Sierra Leone and Liberia. Students there focus on required texts and work specifically toward examinations. Thus, with such a highly structured program there is hardly the time or motivation for reading for pleasure.

It can be argued quite justifiably that the educational system has helped to strengthen utilitarian attitudes about reading. However, once students leave school and are free from the highly structured program of learning they peruse a large variety of reading materials. In a study commissioned by the GBDC, Kotei and Twumasi disproved

> the hypothesis that people do not read outside their classroom commitment or work schedule because of lack of interest or lack of social rewards. On the contrary, the indication was that people read various material in order to enhance their life-styles, and specifically to gain knowledge of a special kind. Out of the total sample of 610, 586 respondents (96.1%) informed the researchers that they read various books, journals, and articles to enrich their knowledge, to broaden their cultural horizon and to alleviate boredom. Only 3.6% indicate firmly that since leaving school they have

> stopped because they were not motivated. (Kotei, The Book in Africa, 162)

It is suspected that reading in Ghana is curbed by social and cultural circumstances. In his study of reading habits in Africa, Zell concludes:

> The social circumstances of the populace impinge heavily on their reading habits. But before books and reading can be effectively promoted, many people will have to change their sets of values and attach less importance to the display of wealth. Good reading habits need to be inculcated in the home and at an impressionable age. (Zell, Publishing in Africa, 6)

In their own research, Kotei and Twumasi note that communal living, which is the norm in Ghana, severely hinders reading.[31]

> Traditions are so cohesive that they tend to preclude all alien influences including alphabetic culture ... individuality, that is any desire to pursue individualist behaviour, is submerged in communality. The traditional social organization does not encourage the reading habit. (Kotei, The Book in Africa, 150)

However Kotei and Twumasi also point out that

> Some people are still able to escape the clamour of communality in order to read. It all depends on the strength of one's desire to read. (Kotei, The Book in Africa, 150)

Kotei and Twumasi also maintain that

> Most students in developing countries lack intellectual curiosity, owing to psychological constraints of their class-conscious, authoritarian societies .... Their deference to age, parental, religious, political and academic authorities have posed a curb on independent thought and investigation. This means that they do not read beyond the prescribed minimum. (Kotei, The Book in Africa, 181)

It seems that Kotei and Twumasi ignore the truly positive impact of social and cultural traditions, especially on young people, in stimulating interest in creativity through listening to folk tales, riddles, proverbs, dancing and other forms of orature. The enjoyment of literature is communal, and involves general participation on a daily.

The currents by which the reading habits of Ghanaians are examined need to be clarified in relation to oral literature since this literature, much like the written one, stimulates people to appreciate literature. Another concern about determining the reading habits is the tendency to discount popular literature as well as magazine and newspaper reading. The important question is not whether Ghanaians read, but what they read. The book market in Ghana is much wider than suspected. Researchers would gain a proper understanding of the reading habits of Ghanaians if the appropriate questions were asked. As it is, too much emphasis is placed on such indicators as circulation figures, low literacy rates and low incomes. Consequently, less consideration is given to the ability of readers in Ghana to circumvent these problems and to continue to enrich their minds in spite of their limitations. With about a third of Ghana's population under 15 years of age, there is a large potential market for the book industry. However, in order to succeed, publishers must understand the mechanisms of the book industry, especially the needs and demands of their readers.

A Selection of Local Publishing Houses

There have been a number of programs launched by both the government and private sector to bolster publishing and to make literature appealing. The Ghana Book Development Council (GBDC) has launched comprehensive schemes of support for writers, publishers, book sellers and traders, and readers. Many literary prizes have been established for excellence in book production. New publishing houses such as Woeli publishers have been set up. Restrictions on foreign exchange have been eased considerably. Naturally, the expansion of the production of books means growth in Ghanaian literature. To further demonstrate this link between publishing and the eventual dissemination of Ghanaian literature it is necessary to examine the operation of a few selected local publishing houses. The case studies show that had their operation been smooth more effecient, these publishing houses would have made a far greater contribution to Ghanaian literature than they have so far accomplished.

The Ghana Publishing Corporation (GPC)

Initially established as the State Publishing Corporation in 1965, this publishing corporation was later re-named GPC in recognition of its expanded role. It represents a concrete manifestation of Nkrumah's commitment to develop indigenous cultural institutions as well as a furtherance of the pragmatic need for providing text books to schools in Ghana.[32] The GPC has publishing, printing, distribution and marketing divisions. Printing is done by the Assembly and Victoriaborg Presses in Accra and also by the Tema Press which is the largest and most modern facility.

There is no doubt that the responsibilities of the GPC are overwhelming and that it can only achieve its goals with great difficulty. As can be expected, publications for the government bureaucracy receives top priority. Kotei makes the following general observation which is related to the GPC's experience as a government printer:

> The growth of official publishing itself has been guided by mixed motives of political profit and administrative necessity. The more developed the government machinery, the more statistical, political, economic, even historical and scientific documents the state must publish. Thus official documents have grown progressively more numerous than private, commercial publications, and more diversified in their objectives. (198)

Besides having to struggle to meet the needs of government, the GPC also has difficulties with finance. The relationship between the GPC and successive governments in Ghana, especially concerning financial arrangements, has not been clearly defined. For example, article 14 (Part V Financial Provisions) states that the Government may fund the entire budget of the GPC. But, article 16 rules that the Minister for Finance and Economic Planning may from time to time prescribe the maximum funding for the corporation. The reins controlling funding of the GPC were held by governments which have not been stable themselves. The traumas that have come with changes in government have been severely experienced by the GPC as transactions have been put on hold and new relationships have had to be forged with new officials.

However, Nimako also points out that the GPC's financial problems are partly caused by their accounting practices. The corporation

> operates a centralised accounting system. This arrangement means that the Publishing Division does not pay cash for its orders to the Tema Press. It also means the Distribution and Sales Division does not render accounts to the Publishing Division for the sale of published books. (134)

It did not take long for the financial and managerial problems of the GPC to surface. Within just five years of operation a commission of inquiry had to be set up to investigate the operations of the corporation. Also, in 1970 the MacMillan Company of Britain was invited to help resolve management and other problems that the GPC faced.[33] It is very clear that the British company got a large percentage of GPC's shares for almost nothing. As Kotei points out,

> When the total amount of money invested in the new Heidelberg printing installations at Tema (1.2 million cedis) is added to the already existing equipment in the five government printing presses on which the publishing division would depend, and when we add the capital investment of the original Ghana Book Suppliers Limited (obtained by a Ghanaian Government Loan) to enable new Distribution and Sales Divisions to distribute free textbooks to all twelve regional centres, the MacMillan contribution of 5,393 British Pounds, plus the sole Director's salary, was far short of a 40% investment.[34]

The agreement was exploitative and typical of many of the "joint ventures" between Ghanaian (African) and western companies. By this agreement, Kotei maintains,

> MacMillan had everything to gain and nothing to lose from the sale of textbooks which dominated publishing through that period. Moreover, the Government of Ghana offered guarantees for the complete sale of all other publications. Any losses would be covered by subsidies. (Kotei, The Book In Africa Today, 40)

The Macmillan agreement is a testimony of the mismanagement in the GPC especially in the late 1960's and 1970's. The managerial problems were additional to the difficulties of securing foreign exchange to procure new equipment as well as spare parts to maintain existing machines.

Thus, the GPC could only attain limited goals. Djoleto writes about the prolonged gestation before a book is produced by this company:

> At the GPC, the chronic shortage of production materials delayed publication of some titles for 5 or more years. The Tema Press ... had a backlog of over 150 manuscripts to clear by 1980. The press therefore placed an embargo on processed new manuscripts from the Publishing Division. The 1980 embargo on processed new manuscripts means that 31 titles, if not given to private printers, would wait indefinitely. The result was that after publishing 29 titles in 1978, the Division could manage 7 in 1980, 1 in 1981 and 3 in 1982. (Djoleto, 79)

But it must be admitted that the GPC had some success with the publication of school text books. It has remained a major producer of text books especially for elementary schools. In spite of its numerous problems, the GPC has published internationally acclaimed books on general and children's literature. One example is Meshack Asare's Tawia Goes To Sea (1970) which won the United Nations award for the best children's book published in Africa in 1972. This book has been translated into Japanese, French and German. T.J. Enim's Seidu Drives His Father's Cow (1975) and J.O. de Graft Hanson's The Fetish Hideout have been translated into Russian. Kofi Agovi's Novels of Social Change was published in 1988.

The present Managing Director of GPC, F.K. Nyarko is optimistic about the future of the GPC. In the last few years there have been agreements with Ghanaian private publishers to co-publish text books. Also, many of the books published by the GPC including text books are sold at the open market. The GPC is striving to become an independent corporation and to reduce or even break the control by the government. Such re-organization, it is hoped, will enable the GPC to attain its proper role as the major publisher of Ghanaian writing.

The Bureau of Ghana Languages (BGL)

The Bureau of Ghana Languages (BGL) was established by the government of Ghana in 1951 (it was known initially as the Vernacular Literature Bureau) with assistance from UNESCO. The instrument of incorporation was signed in 1950 (131). In my interview with him in Accra on May 28, 1988, the BGL's D.E.K. Krampah, stated that the main objective is

> to provide reading materials in various Gold Coast (Ghanaian) languages for the new literates who were being turned out from the Mass Literacy Campaign of the late 1940's and 1950's. (Interview with Krampah, p.1)

The BGL has been recognised as the major publisher of literature in Ghanaian languages. Before its establishment, publishing and promotion of writing in Ghanaian languages was mostly by Christian missions in furtherance of proselytism. Often each mission published books in languages of the regions in which they operated. In contrast the BGL is a national establishment which publishes religious and secular texts in all the major Ghanaian languages. This trend has led to the publication of numerous works of secular literature in Ghanaian languages.

During its early stages, the BGL published mostly newspapers and pamphlets in Akwampi Twi, Asante Twi, Fante, Ga, Dagbani, Ewe, Kasem and Nzima. The immediate concern then was to provide reading materials for the mass literacy programs and adult education. There was hardly any publication of creative writing. However the BGL's commitments changed with the expansion of education in the late 1950's and the 1960's. It concentrated on publishing school textbooks, fictional writing and miscellaneous books. Many of the books published by the BGL (especially since the 1970's) have been selected for General Certificate of Examinations for secondary schools and also for studies at the Universities of Ghana and Cape Coast and the Ghana School of Languages. Krampah states that the BGL is:

> the producer/publisher of about 85% of all the Ghanaian language books that the GES [Ghana Educational Service] procures for use in schools - both first and second cycles and in even Ghanaian Language Departments in our institutions of higher learning. (Interview with Krampah, May 28, 1988, p.8)

Since its inception the BGL has consistently published materials with its peak output (thus far) occuring between 1974 and 1975. It has published texts in drama, poetry and novel, folklore, and also official bulletins and government gazettes. The BGL also publishes Ghanaian language translations of literary texts of world masterpieces. The books published by the BGL contain from 20 to 204 pages, with the average being 100 pages.

Among the major Ghanaian authors whose works have been published by the BGL are A.C. Dente (Akan) and Bidi Setsofia (Ewe). The achievements of the BGL are impressive given the numerous problems that it faces: lack of efficient machines for printing, shortages of basic materials such as paper and ink, the lack of transportation, orthographical and dialectal difficulties due to publishing in multiple languages, etc.

The BGL works closely with the Post and Telecomunications Corporation, teachers' associations and transport operators to develop standard spellings of place names. As well as maintaining a compendium on the correct spelling of words in Ghanaian languages it serves as a research unit for studies in Ghanaian languages. As required by law, copies of all BGL's publications are deposited with the national library. The BGL used to own a few vehicles for promotion drives and for direct sales to customers but they have all broken down, creating massive problems of shortages and distribution. The BGL has also worked in cooporation with the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development (which are responsible for adult education) to distribute their works and to promote mass educational campaigns.

In addition to producing texts for mass education and the general readership in Ghana, the BGL exports its books to neighbouring countries and is thus helping to create an international market for Ghanaian language literatures.

> Our Ewe books are read in the Republic of Togo. Our Nzema books are read in the Adieke Region i.e. the eastern part of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire. Our Kasem books are read in some areas across the northern border with Burkina Faso. (Interview with Krampah, May 28, 1988, p.8)

The BGL is hopeful about the future of publishing in Ghanaian languages. According to Krampah,

> This [writing in Ghanaian languages] is less prestigious than writing in English because the educated segment have tended to pay more attention to English for its obvious advantages as an international language. This is purely a matter of orientation, and nothing else. The picture is changing very quickly and more and more attention is being turned to Ghanaian languages. (Interview with Krampah, May 28, 1988, p.10)

As a result of the BGL's substantial production of high quality literature in local languages, no serious critic of Ghanaian literature can ignore indigenous language writing.

Non-Governmental Publishing Houses

Direct government participation in publishing in Ghana has led to the establishment of the GPC and the BGL. State involvement in publishing, however, has not resulted in a government monopoly or control over the book industry.

Rather, it has stimulated private interest in publishing. Djoleto notes:

> The role of the GPC has actually been more catalytic than monopolistic. Undoubtedly its organisation and size could easily lead to the impression that private book publishing and printing and selling would have no place in the country. In practice, however, its achievement and operations have spurred the private sector to better performance. (83)

Because it has never been able to meet its mandate totally, the GPC has had to enter agreements with both foreign and local private publishing houses. For example, the GPC prints books for Anowuo Education Publications on credit and waits for the private publishing house to finish selling the books before paying up.

Along with its sponsorship of state publishing, the Ghana government has tried to develop and protect indigenous private ownership in this industry. An investment decree passed in 1976 prohibited foreign firms from publishing and distributing books in the country. Consequently, the multinational firms have sold their assets to Ghanaian entrepreneurs. Like the state publishing houses, the private publishers operate with extreme difficulty. Many of them exist on a month-to-month, if not day-by-day basis. The well established publishers ones like Adwinsa, Sedco, Afram, Moxon, Anowo, Ghana Universities Press and the Christian publishing houses (Waterville, Methodist Book Depot, Asempa and African Christian Press) operate in defiance of great odds.

Ghana Universities Press

The Ghana Universities Press (GUP) was established in 1962 as a consortium to publish scholarly works and scientific research by the Universities of Science and Technolgy, Cape Coast and Ghana. An academic publishing house, the GUP is government subsidized. Its clientele is limited and as a result it is often not able to break even financially.

The GUP also has structural problems which hinder its operations. As part of the University system, the GUP is subject to its regulations and statutes. Publication boards are dominated by university professors, some of whom do not have the expertise nor the sensitivity to the time constraints and other considerations that are crucial for successful publishing.

The quantity of texts published by the GUP is disappointing. Between 1978 and 1982 the GUP published only three books and fifeteen monographs. There was no production at all in 1981 and 1982. However, since 1986 the GUP seems to have "awakened"; it has published at least four monographs and a number of journals.

Anowuo

Compared with the poor publishing record of the GUP, the private publishing firms have fared much better. A notable active private publishing house, Anowuo, is owned and managed by a versatile Ghanaian writer/businessman, Asare Konadu, whose own works include The Wizard of Asamang and The Lawyer Who Bungled His Life (published by his own company, Anowuo) and A Woman in Her Prime and Ordained By The Oracles (both published by Heinemann).

Konadu has received the support of GPC which has granted him extended credit for printing contracts and the GBDC which advises him on editing and marketing. He works with a regular staff of less than a dozen persons, but also relies on the services of university professors and other experts from time to time. Konadu has a wide network of distribution outlets. In an interview which he granted in the early stages of his publishing career, Konadu talked about how Anowuo manages to get books to readers:

> I made sure that copies of my books reached every village in the country. My works were distributed either by Post or through personal visits to secondary schools and training colleges, and by appointing teachers and postal agents throughout the country as agents in the selling of my books. Rather than waiting in shops for people to buy them, these books were taken directly to the people on the spot, and they had no choice but to take them as the books come and they found them interesting.[35]

That Anowuo has survived and actually prospered when other publishing houses have collapsed must be attributed to Konadu's good judgement, versatility, managerial skills and sensitivity to the interests of readers in Ghana. Also, he has been successful because his literary products have a ready market. Anowuo publishes from ten to twelve books annually on subjects ranging from popular fiction to drama to "how-to" books (i.e., How To Get Along With Others and Guide To Good Manners). It has also published many books for the Ministry of Education.

Afram and Woeli Publishers

Other indigenous Ghanaian private publishing firms which have achieved success in recent years include Afram Publications and Woeli Publishers. Founded in 1974 under the management of Sam Woode, Afram Publications has produced well over 50 books on subjects such as civic education, notes and guides for learning, drama and speeches by famous Ghanaians. It would seem that this firm caters to the same clientele as Anowuo.

Woeli was established in 1984 under the management of Atsu Dekutse, an expert in publishing. Woeli's emphasis is on creative writing, but it also publishes scholarly books in general. Its recent publication, Earthchild by Kofi Anyidoho has received favorable reviews. Woeli has worked jointly with other publishers, local and foreign, to share costs and to serve the market effectively. Woeli and Sedco collaborated to publish Kofi Awoonor's Ghana: A Political History. Woeli has co-published with The Greenfield Review Press, New York, and has the rights to market Awoonor's Until The Morning After in Ghana.

With cooperative ventures (at the local level and with foreign partners), the limitations of individual publishers can be minimised. Publishers are then able to share the cost of production and can benefit from an extended channel of distribution and marketing. As well, the preparing of catalogues and the processing of book order by a centralized body of publishers tend to facilitate the distribution of literary products.

Notes

Christianity and Islam

[1] Chinua Achebe, Arrow of God (New York: Anchor, 1969), 45-46. I have cited the same passage (Morning Yet on Creation Day, p.100) in Chapter Two of this dissertation. Further references to this literary work will be made parenthetically in my text.

[2] Christian missions, undoubtedly, made major contributions in education and book publishing. However, they failed to integrate local traditions into their teaching. Thus many of their critics view the programs of the Christian missions as detrimental to development of the indigenous cultures.

[3] E.N. Obiechina "Growth of Written Literature in English-Speaking West Africa," Présence Africaine 66 (1968): 58. Further references to this literary work will be made parenthetically in my text.

[4] Albert Gérard, African Languages Literatures: Introduction to the Literary History of Sub-Saharan Africa (Essex: Longman, 1981), xiii.

[5] Cited in Obiechina, "Growth of Written Literature in English-Speaking West Africa," 64.

[6] Petr Zima, "Language, Script, Vernacular Literature in West Africa," African Language Review 8 (1969): 220.

[7] Thomas Hodgkin, "The Islamic Literary Tradition in Ghana," Islam in Tropical Africa, ed., F.M. Lewis (Oxford: UP), 451.

[8] Petr Zima, "Language, Script, Vernacular Literature in West Africa," 220.

[9] Cited in Hans W. Derbrunner, A History of Christianity in Ghana (Accra: Waterville Publishing House, 1967), 35.

[10] S.K. Odamtten, The Missionary Factor in Ghana's Development (1820-1880) (Accra: Waterville Publishing House, 1978), 112.

[11] Cited in Debrunner, A History of Christianity in Ghana, 145.

[12] Basel Mission Archives: Missionarskonferenz Christianborg, July 2 1853. Cited in Debrunner, A History of Christianity in Ghana, 135.

[13] B.W. Andrzejewski, S. Pilaszewicz and W. Tyloch, Literatures in African Languages (New York: Cambridge UP, 1985), 57.

[14] Gérard, African Languages Literatures: Introduction to the Literary History of Sub-Saharan Africa, xiii.

[15] J.G. Christaller, "Preface," A Grammar of the Ashante and Fante Languages. Cited in S.K. Oddamten, The Missionary Factor in Ghana's Development (1820-1880), 123.

[16] I.K. Kotei, "Some Cultural and Social Factors of Book Reading and Publishing in Africa," Publishing in Africa in the Seventies: Proceedings of an International Conference on Publishing and Book Development held at the University of Ife, Ile Ife, Nigeria, December 1975, eds., Edwinna Oluwasanmi, Eva McLean and Hans Zell (Ile Ife: University of Ife Press, 1975) 174. Further references to this literary work will be made parenthetically in my text.

[17] This error is evident in Magnus Sampson's History of Gold Coast Journalism and J.E.K. Yankey "A Short History of Printing in Ghana." Ghana Book World 1 (1978): 31-33.

[18] Letter of July 11, 1859 by Charles Bannerman. A copy of this letter is published in K.A.B. Jones-Quartey, History, Politics and Early Press in Ghana: The Fictions and Facts (Accra: GPC, 1975), 40.

[19] Jones-Quartey, History, Politics and Early Press in Ghana: The Fictions and Facts, 29. Further reference to this literary work will be made in parenthesis in my text. Jones-Quartey corrects the commonly held view (a misconception which was manifested in Casely-Hayford's Gold Coast Institutions (1903) and which filtered into studies on the history of publishing in Ghana) that the first newspaper to be published in the Gold Coast was by an indigenous Ghanaian, Charles Bannerman, who hand wrote the journal, The West African Herald starting in September 1857.

[20] J.E.K. Yankey "A Short History of Printing in Ghana," Ghana Book World 1 (1978): 31.

[21] Abiola Irele, "The African Publisher," Publishing in Nigeria (Benin: Ethiope Publishing Corporation, 1972), 15.

[22] A listing of some of these books: Grace Osei-Mensah, Eight Delightful Folktales (Accra: Waterville, 1970) and Sabastian J. Kwamuar, Ewo moya na fiaga agokoli (A Shock for Chief Agokoli) (Accra: Waterville, 1970).

[23] Amu Djoleto, "Publishing in Ghana: Aspects of Knowledge and Development," Publishing in the Third World, eds., Philip Amadio, A. Arboleda S. Gopinathan (New

Hampshire: Heinemann, 1988), 78. Further references to this literary work will be made parenthetically in my text.

[24] D.A. Nimako "Ghana: Republic of Ghana," The Book Trade of the World IV: Africa, eds., Sigfred Taubert and Peter Weidhaas (New York: K.G. Saur Munchen, 1984), 135.

Publishing Output 1978-82

Publishers	Number
GPC	51
Waterville	35
BGL	95
GUP	03
Afram, Publications	24
Sedco Publishing Co.	16
Adwinsa Publishing Co.	16
Edupress (1979-82)	07
Total	247

Further reference to Nimako's article will be made in parenthesis and entered in my text.

[25] Atukwei Okai, "Publishing in Africa," West Africa 3486 (July, 1982): 1291.

[26] Hans M. Zell, Publishing and Book Development in Africa A Bibliography (Paris: UNESCO, 1984), 1. Further reference to this literary work will be made in parenthesis in my text.

[27] Zell, The Book Trade of the World IV: Africa, eds., Sigfred Taubert and Peter Weidhaas (New York: K.G. Saur Munchen, 1984), 16.

[28] Zell, "Problems of Publishing in African Languages" West Africa 3282 (June 16, 1980): 1071.

[29] Ibid, 1072.

[30] Eva M. Ruthgeber, "The Book Industry 1973-1983: A Decade of Development?" Publishing in The Third World, eds., G. Altbach, Amadio A. Arboledu and S. Gopinathan (New Hampshire: HEB, 1985), 67.

[31] In her own survey, "Reading by Adults in Uganda, a Report on a Survey of Reading Habits of Educated Adults" (Makerere University College, 1978, unpublished paper), Pauline Philipps found that a major complaint among students who tried to read at home was 'noise'. The traditional home is like a social market in which being alone is discouraged.

[32] As stated in a Government Policy Statement of 1970, the GPC's objectives have been listed as follows:

A. To print, publish, distribute and market books and other reading materials for schools, higher educational institutions and the general public.

B. To purchase in Ghana, for distribution and marketing, books and other educational materials and equipment which are produced in Ghana.

C. To import such educational materials and equipment as are not produced in Ghana.

D. To explore the markets of neighbouring African states and the markets of other countries with a view to exporting on a commercial basis any of the products of the corporation, and to effect such exports.

E. To print and publish on a commercial basis any document for or on behalf of the government, any statutory corporation or public corporation or any person.

The GPC has publishing, printing distribution and marketing divisions.

"Ghana Publishing Corporation Instrument Act 232," (December 11, 1970).

[33] A.K. Brown, "State Publishing in Ghana: Has it Benefited Ghana?" Publishing in Africa in the Seventies, 117-118. The terms of the agreement reached between the GPC and MacMillan include the following:

A. A Macmillan representative was to serve on the board of the GPC and was entitled to vote on matters relating to publishing, but was to advise on matters relating to other divisions.

B. MacMillan was to provide training for the staff of the GPC.

C. MacMillan was to receive 40% of the shares of the GPC. MacMillan in turn was to give GPC 5,393 British Pounds.

D. MacMillan was to provide advice and expertise on general editing for a fee.

[34] S.I.A. Kotei, *The Book Today in Africa* (Paris: UNESCO, 1981), 39-40.

[35] Stephen H. Grant "Publisher for the Many," *Africa Report* 17.1 (January, 1972): 27.

Chapter Six

Print and Non-Print Media and Promotional Associations

Religious bodies, literary groups, radio and television, magazines, journals and individuals have played major roles in the development of Ghanaian literature. Prior to Independence, literature was promoted by a number of religious groups and social clubs which organised their activities for clientèles in Accra, Cape Coast and mining towns. With Independence and the expansion of education and literacy activities, there has been a growing nuclei of authors, publishers and educators who have been working toward the development of literature in the country. Literary activities which at one time were tied with religious and social agendas have become varied and national in scope.

Pre-Independence Era

Print Media

The early journals and newspapers in Ghana were published by the Christian mission bodies and the educated elites. As part of their objectives of promoting literacy and Christianity the Protestant Bremen mission launched the periodical Nutifafa na mi (The Message of Peace) in 1903 (it was shifted to Lome in 1925) and the Catholic mission established Mia Xolo (Our Friend) in 1919. These religious publications which carried articles about Christian living, hygiene, and western culture were the early avenues for writing in Ewe. They also published translations of short stories from European languages and transcriptions of Ewe oral poetry and folklore. As well, the Catholics also published a weekly, The Standard, Cape Coast, and two monthly magazines, The Gold Coast Catholic Voice (since 1926) and Akan Kyerema.

The Basel and Wesleyan missions established a number of magazines. The Basel group published a church monthly, The Christian People -- which later became The Christian Way -- jointly with the Bremen mission. This magazine again changed to The Christian Messanger in the 1950's and was issued in English, Twi, Ewe and Ga editions. The Wesleyans published The Golden Shore, a monthly. Another magazine, Gold Coast Youth Magazine (1917) was produced through hand writing by the students of a Wesleyan educational establishment, Mfantsipim school.

In the decade before Independence, the Vernacular Literature Bureau (VLB) was reorganised as the Bureau of Ghana Languages (BGL) with firm support by the Nkrumah administration to develop writing in local languages. As part of its major function of producing works in Ghanaian languages, the newly constituted BGL published a number of magazines which became well known throughout the country. An example was the Ewe weekly, Mia Denyigba (Our Country), begun in 1956 and edited by C.K. Tsekpo. This magazine was moved to Togo after a crisis between Ghana and Togo over the Trans-Volta Togoland region. The BGL then launched a new Ewe periodical, Motabiala (He Who Asks The Way).. Both magazines dealt with purely literary, cultural, political and health issues. Other local Ghanaian magazines (for example, Akwansosem, Mansralo, and Kasem Labare, which were published by the BGL) were organised in manner similar to Motabiala.

Non-Print Media

Literary activities were promoted through social clubs and various educational institutions. The educational policy of the colonial government was determined by the need to produce functionaries for the administration. However, a few of the British administrators were truly committed to the development of the national culture and they set up programs which ultimately helped in the development of literature. A notable example was Rev. W.T. Balme who in 1922 formed the West African Literature Society (WALS). He was concerned about the anomaly that schools in West Africa had to use text books identical with those used in schools in Britain. Consequently WALS launched a project to produce a series of primers and readers, using the format of similar works for schools in Britain, but incorporating African contents. The result was the production of the Atlantic Series of Readers which sold over a quarter of a million copies across West Africa. Balme himself went on to become the principal of the Gold Coast College and later, the principal the University of Ghana.

Under the colonial administration the few educated Ghanaians lived mostly in Cape Coast and Accra. These intellectuals knew and supported each other as they strove for a concerted front to oppose colonial rule. There was a sense of community as the members identified with the nationalist movement and with social and literary activities. Leadership was provided by recognised intellectuals like Casely-Hayford and Kobina Sekyi. These informal clubs became the centre of literary activities and nationalist campaigns. For example, the Accra Literary and Social Club published a monthly, Literary and Social Guide (from 1919-1922).

Toward the end of the Second World War, other communities of educated people grew up around mining and other major towns. There was an increase in the number of social and literary clubs whose membership consisted of government officials, clerks, teachers, lawyers, doctors and writers who served as the "intellectual mentors" of their clubs. According to Kofi Agovi who has studied the development of social and literary clubs in Ghana, these associations "became institutions of major significance [for] the development of creative writing in Ghana prior to Independence".[1]

The social and literary clubs served as training grounds for many Ghanaian writers and intellectuals. Agovi notes the example of Mabel Dove Danquah, the "First Lady of Pen and Parliament in Ghana" whose "creative efforts sprang directly from her membership" (Agovi, 2) in one of these clubs. Mabel Danquah contributed articles to The Times of West Africa (1932-5) which was owned by the Ghanaian nationalist J.B. Danquah. Between 1931 and 1938, she became a regular columnist for the creative arts in The Gold Coast Spectator.

In addition, these clubs served as the nurturing grounds for national cultural and political awakening. J.B. Danquah in particular built a vanguard for political activities from these social and literary clubs with the organisation of his Gold Coast Youth Conference.

But the social and literary clubs were attended by an elite which aspired to the mannerisms and values of European civilization:

> The elite sought to control - believing that they were the successors to colonialism. They had been educated and trained to uphold the best in European civilisation in the Ghanaian environment. Hence whatever the white man did, they would do the same if not better. Consequently, on the model of European literary and social clubs established by the colonial administrators to remind them of the cultivation at home in England, the educated elite also created and patronised literary clubs in Ghana. (Agovi, 2-3)

Consequently, these clubs became the target of satirists and others who condemned its members for being superficial and for aping Western manners. Kobina Sekyi's The Blinkards was performed for the cosmopolitan club in Cape Coast in 1915 and the social and literary club in Accra after the First World War. This social comedy was aimed at exposing the mimicry of Western life style by educated Ghanaians. Another Ghanaian dramatist, Henry Ofori also mocks at the shallow mentality of the assimilated Ghanaians in his satirical play "The Literary Society" which was published in The Voices of Ghana (1958).

In 1931, The Gold Coast Independent published a letter by a correspondent, C.V. Bruce, who complained about how newspapers give less attention to literary activities and more publicity to dances organised by the literary clubs:

> The newspapers chronicle dances which take place in nearly every town in the country whilst the literary side is contemptuously neglected .... There is hardly anything humanity wants to do with a great dances; but a person with a great literary knowledge finds always a congenial place as mentor or leader among his benighted friends .... It is now time to realise ... and appreciate the values and virtues of well-organised and properly conducted literary clubs. A learned man dies but his name and fame lives for ever.[2]

In these clubs, literary activities were secondary to social and political activities. However, this trend was to change during the Post-Independence era when literary associations were organised with the clear mandate of developing literature in the country.

The Post-Independence Era

During the period leading to independence, Ghanaian literature received great impetus from the first indigenous national government led by Nkrumah who consciously sought to develop and promote national culture. Nkrumah's government attempted to strengthen its nationalist agenda by establishing a number of artistic and creative institutions: the Institute of African Studies; the Institute of Art and Culture (later known as the Ghana Arts Council); the School of Music; the Ghana Publishing Corporation (GPC); Radio Ghana (formerly known as Gold Coast Radio) and Ghana Broadcasting Television (GBC TV).

A slightly different vehicle for the proliferation of literature in Ghana is the library system. The Ghana Library Board has opened branches all over the country and has provided mobile services for small towns and villages. It has offered basic texts for schools, supplementary readers and magazines to the public. The Library Board has initiated the annual series, The Bibliography of Ghana, which comprises literary works published on and in Ghana.

Agovi points out that:

> These institutions [GPC, the Institute of African Studies, etc.] and the new ideas and perspectives which informed them sought to channel creative expressions towards well-defined national aspirations and goals. They gave rise to new expectations in the area of creative writing which focused attention on problems the new state of Ghana. They also gave rise to an awareness of culture and literature as institutionalised movement of ideas or schools, and thought during this period. (11)

These cultural institutions have provided support for new artists. They have often served as the fora to introduce new artists to the public and also to celebrate the works of the distinguished ones.

Ghanaian literature has also benefited from the climate of general optimism. A direct outcome of Nkrumah's cultural programs was the publication of Voices of Ghana (1958), a literary work which made manifest "the desire to cultivate a national literature".[3] This anthology "marks inauguration of a new literary movement in Post-Independence Ghana" (Agovi, 10). Voices is an artistic expression of a national culture awakening.

Print Media: Journals, Magazines and Newspapers

Ghanaian artists have actively sought diverse avenues for the dissemination of literature. They have tried to promote interest in literature through writing book reviews in journals and national newspapers and also by forming literary and creative clubs for young people. Although many of the literary journals in Ghana suffer the 'Abiku Complex' (this term was used by Kole Omotoso to compare the intermittent journals in Africa with the Abiku child, who, in the Yoruba tradition, dies soon after his birth and is reborn) they are nevertheless among the most effective avenues for the development of literature in Ghana.

One of the first major literary journals in Ghana, Okyeame (meaning linguist), was established in 1961 "to arouse consciousness in the people interested in creative writing, to [meet] the need of developing literature in

[Ghana]" (Agovi, 11). Consequently, this journal became a major outlet for poets, dramatists, novelists, short story writers and critics. Some of the early works of major Ghanaian writers like Frank Parkes, Efua Sutherland, Ayi Kwei Armah, Ama Ata Aidoo and Kofi Awoonor were first published in Okyeame. Other Ghanaian journals like Legon Observer and The Universitas have also provided vitally needed platforms for debate about Ghanaian literature and for emerging new voices in the country. A cultural magazine, Uhuru, was launched in 1989 to present regular features on the state of the the national culture and to celebrate the achievements of the past. Such types of journals are "the primary fertilizing agents"[4] for the flowering of literature. Being local publications, these journals reflect the current state of the national literature as well as give exposure to new creative voices.

Besides these journals, social and cultural magazines and national newspapers also feature a limited number of literary works. The advantage for publishing literary works in newspapers is that they receive wide circulation. The national weeklies, The Mirror and The Spectator, regularly publish short stories, poetry, satirical works and book reviews. The regular column "Baffour," published in The Spectator, is a veiled attack on government. In The Mirror, Kwesi Yankah, a lecturer at the University of Ghana writes a regular feature, "Woes of a Kwatriot", a satirical attack on anomalies in the country. For example, in the July 16, 1988 issue of the newspaper, Yankah describes the predicament of mine workers in Ghana: "We, the underground workers, spend so much time underground and by the time we resurface, all the food is shared".[5] This issue of the The Mirror also contains poetry (George Sydney Abugri's "Trapped" and John Aidoo's "Images") and a book review (Nanabanyin Dadson's review of James Putch Commey's The Missing Link). The July 23, 1988 issue of The Mirror published a review of C. Wontewe and G.N. Haick's novella, A Spell of Love and The Crab Decision. Given the general difficulties of publishing in Ghana, the cultural magazines and the national newspapers are often the only channels of exposure some of the writers can access.

Non-Print Media: Radio and Television

Since the late 1950's radio has been increasingly used as an outlet for creative expression. Under Nkrumah's government it served as an effective network for education about national culture and continental identity. Programs like the "African Scene", "Cultural Heritage", "Ghana Today" and "For Freedom Fighters" had special messages about liberation movements in Africa. Each day the signature tune of the national radio, the Talking Drum, added special flavour to the broadcast. Radio Ghana was restructured into two stations with broadcasts in Ghanaian languages and

English done by Stations One and Two, respectively. Recently a third station, Radio Three was added.

Radio One broadcasts in the main languages - Akan, Ewe, Ga, Dadgani, Nzema and Hausa - and has excellent programs of drama, story telling sessions, mass education, etc. The broadcasts which feature literary works in local languages have wide appeal. For instance, the Ewe classic, Amegbetor alo Agbezuge fe nutinya, was serialised by Station One and J. Ghartey's Twer Nyame was also broadcast. Occasionally, the radio station organises literary competitions. Bidi Setsoafia's Mede Ablotsi dela, which was popular with listeners, won a G.B.C. literary award in 1957.

Radio Two features educational programs, discussions about drama, short stories and news, among other things. It has story telling sessions (examples are, "Say and Sing" and "Once Upon a Time"') for primary schools. As a part of its weekly broadcast for schools, Radio Two features reviews of books offered at the General Certificate of Examination (G.C.E.) examinations. Then, there is the popular weekly program, "Voices of Our Times", a broadcast of creative works by Ghanaians. Radio has been an effective media for creative artists, many of whom (Rex Quartey and Kobina Acquah for example) have become major Ghanaian writers.

The introduction of television offered new opportunities to Ghanaian artists. Like radio, TV makes it possible for the artist to avoid, at least initially, the problems of publishing. With television it is possible to present the artist live and for the audience to know the performer. GBC TV offers excellent programs in children's literature. Some of the most popular of these are "Koliko", a puppet show based on the adventures of the trickster Ananse and "Children's Own", a show which combines drama, dancing, drumming and poetry recital. Children's programs enjoy wide popularity among both children and adults and some of the literary works have won international awards; "Child From The North" by Sister Rebecca Okine and directed by Bill Marshall won a prize for the best television show at the Hollywood Festival of World Television Shows held in Paris in 1972. Also, "Who is to Blame," written by Jim Osei Blayo and directed by Edward Treku, won the International Board of Directors Award of the Prix Jeunesse Internationale (1980) held in Munich, West Germany. Both the Radio and TV programs for schools supplement and enrich works done in the classroom.

GBC TV has also featured programs in theatres, often Ghanaian plays or classical works performed by a Ghanaian cast. However, it is for drama in local languages that the TV station is most famous. As part of its popular 'Showcase' in Akan, Ga or Ewe, which consists of comedy, magic, music and acting, GBC TV regularly presents plays by popular drama troupes like the Osofo Dadzie group, the Adabraka Drama Troupe, Gomido and Tsitsigeh Drama Troupes, Kohwe and Amansuan Troupe, and the Kusum Agromba Theatre.

The most popular of the drama troupes is Osofo Dadzie which topped the chart in every viewer survey conducted by the GBC TV. The drama which is performed in Akan is a mild satire of deviant behaviours and vices such as corruption, nepotism, profiteering, hoarding and inefficiency. Pseudo-religious solutions, morality or social evangelism are usually presented at the end of the play. In one of the series, "We Are Looking Into It," the slow government bureaucracy is satirised; nothing gets done since officials are indifferent to their responsibilities. In another episode, "Kofi Salanga," the lust for money leads a young mother to dump her baby on her aging grandparents. However towards the end of the play, she relents and comes back after 12 years to reconcile with her child.

Another TV drama company, Obra, has become nearly as popular with viewers as Osofo Dadzie, although some reviewers contend that performances by Obra are often not as vital and humorous as those by Osofo Dadzie. Obra combines acting with gospel, choral and patriotic music in Akan.

On the whole radio and TV have played major roles in stimulating interest in the creative arts in Ghana. They have helped to develop a good climate for the appreciation of literature and to give literature a mass appeal. Radio and TV offer an alternative to literature in print which is mostly accessed by educated people.

Public Performance

In view of the limited outlet for publishing it is not surprising that many Ghanaian artists choose to present their works in live performance. Public performance of literature has enjoyed wide popularity in Ghana and is patronised by large and diverse audiences. This trend has influenced the present state of Ghanaian literature and has caused many of the writers to be conscious of the techniques of orature.

Since the 1970's Ghanaian writers have increasingly taken their works directly to the people; they have devoted their energies to live performance. Public performances, much like radio and television, benefit from an immediate audience. Jawa Apronti of the Institute of African Studies sums up the impact of performance on the contemporary Ghanaian cultural scene:

> [Performance] on stage as well as through radio and TV short circuits the problems faced by all writers in Ghana, especially the young and aspiring ones - the frustration delays encountered in the local publishing houses, which rob the new works of whatever immediate frame of reference or freshness of address they may have had.[6]

Public performance has given a great focus to oral transmission. When an artist recites a poetic work, he 'returns' the artistic work to the oral mode. Through public performance, the Ghanaian artist draws on the vitalities of the oral tradition, the premier and most popular artistic expression.

Perhaps more than any other writer, Atukwei Okai has been largely responsible for the acceptance of public performance in Ghana. His own poetry appears flat and flabby when in cold print but takes a new life in performance. Each performance gives Okai's poetry a new lease of life. Other Ghanaian writers, such as Rex Quartey, Kwabena Asiedu Aboagye, Kwabena Acquah and Martin Owusu, have followed this trend of dramatising their works in public.

Professional drama troupes have also been leaders in presenting artistic works to the Ghanaian public. Through singing, dancing, speech and acting, various troupes present dramatic interpretations of poetry and novels. Some of the theatre companies which actively pursue these goals are the Abibigromma (Blackman's Theatre), Legon Drama Club and Audience Awareness.

The Abibigroma group, which is resident at the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana, recently (1988) staged dramatic versions of Anyidoho's Earth Child and Other Poems, Martin Owusu's The Story Ananse Told and Bill Marshall's The Crows. These performances represent bold efforts to bridge generic demarcations and also to utilise the rich resources of oral and written traditions.

Audience Awareness is an experimental theatre which performs at places including regular theatres, work places and village halls. This theatre company which is led by the versatile Ghanaian actor, Evans Hunter, combines music, dance and story-telling to educate the public about political, economic and cultural issues.

These experimentations and achievements in performance are clear indications of the spread and variety of Ghanaian literature and define a new direction for the national literature. Through these popular fora literature has been made available and accessible to a wide spectrum of the Ghanaian public.

Promotional Associations

Ghanaian literature in the post-independence era has been promoted through the Ghanaian Writers Association (GAW), a national body which, in a way, replaced the social and literary clubs of the Gold Coast period. Initially, there were two national societies, the Ghana Society of Authors and the Ghana Association of Writers, but in the 1970's they merged to become the GAW, which is open to Ghanaian writers, literary critics and scholars. Generally, GAW attempts to stimulate the creation of literature in Ghana. It offers, among other things, assistance at the various stages of production and distribution of literature in Ghana. The GAW conducts workshops on writing, edits manuscripts and even provides funding for the publication of new works. Led by its present president, Atukwei Okai, and through the efforts of members like Kofi Anyidoho and R.A.

Cantey, the profile of the GAW has grown immensely. Its membership has increased and its events are well patronised by the public.

Other literary bodies in Ghana have drawn inspiration from GAW as they strive to meet their own objectives. Among these are the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Children's Literature Foundation (CLF). Membership in the former group is by invitation only and is reserved for distinguished Ghanaian scholars who are deemed to have reached the height of their professional careers.

The CLF was formed in 1978 by a concerned group of Ghanaian educators, publishers, authors, librarians and parents. The intiative for the formation of the CLS came from the Ghana Book Development Council (GBDC). The foundation for the CLS organises workshops, seminars and conferences on children's literature. This body is affiliated with UNESCO, UNICEF and the International Institute of Research on Folk and Children's Literature (Vienna).

The GAW has supported initiatives by schools and colleges across Ghana to produce school plays and magazines and to develop interest in literature and the arts in general. Schools like Ghanata Secondary School, Keta Secondary School and St. Augustines College, Cape Coast have excellent school magazines which are produced by the student body with minimum assistance from the administration and teachers.

An intensive national creative writing program was launched for training colleges, initially, and secondary schools, later, in the mid-sixties. This project began largely through the efforts of Ellen Geer Songstar, an expatriate English teacher at the Aburi Girls' Secondary School. It was affiliated with the Ministry of Education and the Institute of African Studies and was supported by the GAW. Workshops and conferences were held at district, regional and national levels for young and talented writers. Members of the GAW have edited manuscripts and have conducted writing clinics for students.

Selections of creative and literary writings from schools have been published in the annual anthology, Talent For Tomorrow. In the premier issue of this anthology, editors Ellen Songstar and C.K.A Quarshie state:

> It is equally important for [the] youth to learn to recognize, and then write about the pressing problems and opportunities of the present and the future .... [The obligation is to] record in the written word, before it is too late, some of the rich and beautiful "literature" of the past, which is stored within the oral tradition.[7]

In her own essay, "Students' Creative Writing in Ghana" Songstar wrote about the teething problems and eventual success of the Talent for Tomorrow project.

This program has served as a rich nursery for modern Ghanaian writing. Several of the alumni of the writing program have become highly respected writers. R.A. Cantey's "Mystery Of Cockcrow," an excellent short story for children, and Selman Alhassan's "Cowry Girl and Other Stories" were written under this program. Also, Anyidoho made his debut in creative writing as a member of the Accra Training College's Student's Writer's Club (1965). Another established Ghanaian writer of short stories, Ashong-Katai, also participated in this program.

Ghana Book Development Council (GBDC)

The diverse groups of writers, publishers, readers and institutions such as libraries, schools, radio and TV, etc. share a common interest in the development of literature in Ghana. The task of maintaining and strengthening this common platform has been assumed by the GBDC which was established in 1975 and charged with the of co-ordination of the activities of various organisations for the development of Ghanaian literature. The objectives of the GBDC include: 1. to co-ordinate the activities of groups and individuals for the promotion of Ghanaian literature; 2. to promote the efforts of writers, publishers, translators for the production of books in English and Ghanaian languages; 3. to promote and develop reading habits especially among children; 4. to support the formation of associations of writers, illustrators, publishers, books sellers, designers, etc. in order to facilitate the development of the book industry.

The GBDC has been working tirelessly to achieve the above goals. In 1979 it launched the National Book Week which has become an annual event held in the first week of November. It is a celebration which features books, exhibits and symposia for writers, publishers and others. The GBDC has also funded research for the development of local resources (for example, the use of wood from forests in Ghana for paper) for the book industry. The overall concern of this national body is for the growth of a healthy book industry.

Various associations of writers, publishers, librarians and other groups connected with the book industry have been given the full support of the GBDC. Writers and publishers are given advice about the state of the book industry in Ghana. The GBDC works closely with international agencies for education, such as UNESCO and UNICEF, and sponsors Ghanaians to attend international conferences on the book industry and even subsidises rent for space at international fairs for the exhibition of books published in Ghana.

The GBDC itself publishes The Ghana Book World, a bi-annual magazine publication about the book industry in Ghana, and also offers prizes and cash awards for excellence in writing, publishing and illustration. The national award, "The Ghana Book Award", first instituted in 1977, is given for achievement in writing, book design, illustration and other aspects of the book industry. There are prizes for excellence in scholarly books, creative writing and children's literature. Some of the previous winners of the Ghana book award include J.B. Danquah (post-humously), J.H.

Nketia, and Ayi Kwei Armah - authorship; K.B. Arkorful - book design and illustration and Meshack Asare - children's literature and illustration.

In addition to the GBDC book award Ghanaian writers and publishers compete for other national awards: the GAW book prize and the Volta Aluminium Company (Valco) Fund for the best works in drama, fiction, poetry for children and adults. Ghanaian writers and publishers have won numerous prestigeous international awards. Two Ghanaian authors, Meshack Asare and Austin N.E. Amissah, a legal scholar, won the internationally recognised Noma Award for publishing in Africa. This award was instituted by the Japanese publisher, Shoichi Noma, for new books published in Africa in the following classes: scholarly works, children's literature and creative writing. Asare's children's book, The Brassman's Secret which was published by Educational Press and Manufacturers Limited won the 1982 award. This book was praised as "an exciting and unusual children's story, beautifully and imaginatively illustrated".[8] The following year's award went to Amissah for his legal scholarly work, Criminal Procedure in Ghana published by Sedco Publishing Limited, Accra. Amissah's book was described as "a work [which] admirably fills a gap in the literature on the subject" and was also acclaimed for "its high quality of writing [and] for its excellent quality of production".[9]

Another Ghanaian writer, Kobina Acquaah received honorable mention for the Noma Award in 1985. He also won the 1985 British Airways Commonwealth Prize for Poetry with his book, The Man Who Died: Poems 1974-1979. Awoonor's latest work, Until The Morning After: Collected Poems, won the 1989 Commonwealth Prize, Africa Region.

The aforementioned awards are indications of the high quality of Ghanaian writing. However, a complete assessment of this literature must by gauged not only by these awards and prizes or by the works of the major writers, but also by the seemingly insignificant works, the manuscripts that never see print, the public performances, the urban and popular literature, the traditional oral art, and even institutions such as writers associations, publishers, libraries and the GBDC, as well as socio-cultural and politico-economic factors that nurture the appropriate climate for literature in the country. All these different factors determine the complexion and direction of Ghanaian literature. The concerted efforts of the various interest groups have produced a healthy climate that seems to augur well for the future.

Notes

[1] Kofi Agovi, "A Dual Sensibility: The Short Story in Ghana, 1944-80." Paper presented at the 8th International Conference on African Literature and the English Language. University of Calabar, Nigeria, May 3-7, 1988, 3. Further reference to this literary work will be made in parenthesis in my text.

[2] C.V. Bruce, "We must Increase Our Literary Clubs," Letter to The Gold Coast Independence, August 22, 1931, 1068. Also cited by Agovi "A Dual Sensibility," 3.

[3] Charles Angmor, "New Voices in Ghana: A Study in the Development of Ghanaian Literary Writing in English." MA Thesis, Institute of African Studies, Legon. December, 1974.

[4] Bernth Lindfors, "African Little Magazines." Paper presented At The ALA Conference. p. 2.

[5] Kwesi Yankah, "Woes of a Kwatriot," The Mirror, July 16, 1988, 4.

[6] Jawa Apronti "Ghanaian Poetry in the 1970's" New West African Literature (London: HEB, 1979), 31.

[7] Ellen Songster and C.K.A. Quarshie, eds., "Forward," Talent for Tomorrow (Tema: State Publishing Corporation, 1966), ii.

[8] Abiola Irele, The African Book Publishing Record, 9 2-5 (1983): 104.

[9] Ibid.

Chapter Seven

An Appreciation of Samples of Ghanaian Literatures

In this chapter I will examine paradigmatic texts and literary forms which represent significant trends, norms and styles of Ghanaian literature. Specifically, I will analyse the preoccupation with nationalism and Pan-Africanism in Ghanaian literature, popular literature, literature for children, literature in a local language, the funeral dirge, and the Ewe halo tradition. I hope to demonstrate that Ghanaian literature has several centres each of which represents some major component of this literary system.

While it is effective to use single texts to represent thematic pre-occupations with nationalism and Pan-Africanism or dramatic expressions in local languages, this approach must be modified in relation to literary phenomena such as popular literature and funeral dirge. For instance, one cannot adequately study popular literature through a mere textual analysis excluding the social and economic currents that create this literature. A similar argument can be made for children's literature where functional requirements are no less important than aesthetic qualities. Also, it would be limiting indeed to examine the funeral dirge by focusing upon representive texts without a consideration of contextual or sociological factors. The halo poetry of Awoonor and Anyidoho, for example, is based on the traditional Ewe song of abuse and it cannot be understood without contextualization.

Nationalism and Pan-Africanism in Ghanaian Writing: The Examples of Ottobah Cugoano, Joseph E. Casely-Hayford and Ayi Kwei Armah

Two hundred years of Ghanaian writing, from Ottobah Cugoano to Joseph E. Casely-Hayford to Ayi Kwei Armah, has been marked by a commitment to nationalism and Pan-Africanism. These writers and many others have upheld the African mode of living as the primary, perhaps only, basis from which black people can march forward, collectively and positively. Though little known in his native Ghana, Cugoano's Thoughts serves as an appropriate introduction to Ghanaian literature. Casely-Hayford is better known, but mostly for his non-literary activities. The obscurity suffered by Thoughts and Ethiopia Unbound does not extend to Armah's writing. Instead, this contemporary Ghanaian writer has attracted great critical attention, but much of that has been negative and severe. Armah has been beseiged by all sorts of critical explorations, some of which profess to "discover the origin" of Armah's art. Consequently, some of these critics have critically studied the writings of Kafka, Robbe-Grillet and Sartre, and modernism, existentialism and so-called American influence in an attempt to understand Armah's works.[1] What is pitiful about these critical efforts is that the main source of Armah's art has been obvious all along; this is a commitment to a positive African value system. In his conviction, Armah aligns himself with Cugoano and Casely-Hayford; there is a bonding forged from their philosophical and artistic commitments as well as their links to a common native soil. Armah's literary ancestry is to be found in early Ghanaian writing. His Two Thousand Seasons must be studied in relation to the larger configurations of Ghanaian nationalist writing in order to be appreciated, if not understand.

Bruce King comments on the political context of Ghanaian literature:

> Ghanaian writing has behind it a tradition of international consciousness ... Ghana has had a long history of West Indian and Black American contacts. Edward Blyden's militancy influenced the Pan-Negroism of J.E. Casely-Hayford and led to the Pan-Africanism of Nkrumah .... Many foreign black leaders were invited to live in Ghana under Nkrumah. The writing of Ayi Kwei Armah and Kofi Awoonor reflects this tradition. Both are continually aware of the history of the slave trade, colonialism, and the destruction of traditional Africa. Their vision is racial and international, requiring a symbolic technique if its narrative is to be continentally or racially representative. The symbolism of J.E. Casely-Hayford's Ethiopia Unbound is an early precursor of such writings.[2]

This insightful view of Bruce King on Ghanaian literature should be augumented, perhaps, with the inclusion of other works such as those of Cugoano and Sancho.

In emphasizing the strong affinities among Cugoano, Casely-Hayford and Armah, I hope not only to show their major commitments to nationalism and Pan-Africanism, but also to underline the importance of the early writers in the development of Ghanaian thoughts and letters. I will demonstrate that in the fictional recreation of the history of Africa, Armah goes much further, beyond documenting and representing detail, than Cugoano and Casely-Hayford. Also, in following the protest tradition in Ghanaian writing, Armah (to a greater degree and clarity than Cugoano and Casely-Hayford) proposes a solution, a new philosophy ("The Way" of Anoa and black people) which will enable black people to build a better future. In this process I will argue against some of the negative critical reception of Two Thousand Seasons. Much of the adverse criticism of Armah is fragmentary and lacking in knowledge of the history of Ghanaian protest writing. Two Thousand Seasons must be read against the framework provided by Armah's precursors, indeed against the background of African history. Armah's novel is a fictional continuation of the literary trend established by Cugoano and Casely-Hayford. In other words these three writers share the same philosophical, historical and rhetorical space.

Ottobah Cugoano's "Thoughts"

Although Ottobah Cugoano was not able to return to Ghana where he was kidnapped and deported at the age of three, he was never separated emotionally and spiritually from his native land. Thoughts is a testimony of his intense awareness of his origin and concern about the predicament of enslaved Africans. In this semi-autobiographical narrative Cuguano gives a personal account of the experiences of dislocation from family and friends, humiliation at being auctioned off at slave markets, and sufferings on plantations. He challenges popular western myths about the inferiority of black people and makes scathing remarks directed at the church, government and monarchy of England, and the slave traders whom he calls "authors of African graves".[3]

Cugoano never wavers in his commitment to the African people. In his prefactory remarks in the 1791 edition of Thoughts he states his determination to use his writing "to convey instructions to his oppressed countrymen".[4] He addresses his narrative to Ghanaians, black people and in fact all those actions affect Africans. In the corpus of African and African diaspora writing, Cugoano inaugurated a tradition of protest literature for the cause of African nationalism. It is clear that Cugoano's declarations of anger and cynicism toward western values, his projections of the moral and intellectual qualities of black people, and his advocacy of indigenous African culture were early expressions of themes and concerns that have figured prominently in later Ghanaian writing, including the works of Casely-Hayford and Armah. It is unarguable that the writings of Cugoano (and Sanchos and Amo) represent some of the early missing chapters from the literary history Ghana.

In Thoughts the personal experience of Cugoano increases his reliability as an author and strengthens his moral position. He assumes authority in the narrative about incidents which victimised him and millions of African people. Cugoano wrote as an adult and an ex-slave. His memory of his homeland was one he knew as a child: idyllic; simple and innocent. Cugoano recalls his birth-place, his childhood playmates and the incidents which led to his kidnapping and enslavement.

> I was born in the city of Agimaque, on the coast of Fantyn; my father was a companion to the chief in the part of the country of Fantee, and when the old king died ... I was sent for by his nephew, Amro Accasa, who succeeded the old king in the chiefdom of that part of Fantee known by the name of Agimaque and Assinee. I lived with his children enjoying peace and tranquility, about 20 moons, which, according to their way of reckoning, is two years. (6)

It is impressive that after many years of separation from Ghana and the attempts to dehumanise him, Cugoano still retained a sense of his identity.

But Thoughts must not be construed as a felicitous recourse to nostalgia, the trade mark of most twentieth century African negritudinists. On the contrary, his childhood was the only experience Cugoano ever had of Ghana. Thus that idyllic world became his sustenance as he was subjected to slavery and as he witnessed the dehumanisation of black people. Cugoano wrote about how he was

> Brought from a state of innocence and freedom, and, in a barbarous and cruel manner, conveyed to a state of horror and slavery. This abandoned situation may be easier conceived than described. (10)

The kidnapped children were held in European fortresses at "Commenda, Cape Coast Castle, Fort Royal, Queen Anne's Point, Charles Fort, Annamabo, Winebah, Shidoe, Acra and co" (sic, 94) where they were subjected to the most extreme form of cruelty. According to Cugoano the experience was benumbing:

> ... no description can give an adequate idea of the horror of their feelings [the African slaves], and the dreadful calamities they undergo. The treacherous, perfidious and cruel methods made use of in procuring them, are horrible and shocking. (94-95)

Thus Cugoano focused on the general predicament of the slaves noting the cruelty, hunger, misery and death that characterised their trans-Atlantic voyage from West Africa to the Americas. The slaves were locked up in dungeons during the trip. In a language that corresponds to the one used by Yambo Ouologuem (Bound to Violence) and Armah (Two Thousand Seasons), Cugoano states:

> Being in this dreadful captivity and horrible slavery, without any hope of deliverance, for about eight or nine months, beholding the most dreadful scenes of misery and cruelty, and seeing my companions often cruelly lashed, and as it were cut to pieces, for the most trifling faults; this made me often tremble and weep, but I escaped better than many of them. For eating a piece of sugarcane, some were cruelly lashed, or struck over the face to knock their teeth out. (11)

The cruelty suffered by the slaves intensified on the plantations and the atrocities are shocking and painful even to read about.

The experience of dislocation, isolation and physical labour was overwhelming. At the auctions family memebers would plead not to be sold separately. The agony was "heart-piercing" as husbands, wives, son and daughters clung to each other. But they were torn apart, nevertheless, or if the hugging continued, "the flogger [was] called on, and they [were] soon driven away with the bloody commiseration of cutting fangs of the whip lashing their naked body" (96).

It must be noted that many others had previously written about that system, but most of these authors were European intellectuals and abolitionists who could only empathise with the predicament of slaves. Cugoano's narrative is different because as a documentary of the slave trade, it is a personal experience and thus has great credibility.

Cugoano was passionate about Africa and sad about the terrible toll the abhorrent trade of humans was having on that continent. He spoke the truth when he admited that all Africans were not blameless. As he pointed out, some form of slavery existed in Africa prior to the introduction of the western trans-Atlantic system of slavery. However, these domestic slaves were prisoners of war and debtors who were treated decently. The conditions under which the domestic serfs were held (according to Cugoano's description) were somewhat similar to the situation of peasants and slaves under the European feudal system in the Middle Ages or the debtors in Victorian England.

Cugoano did not condone even domestic slavery. Consequently, he was severely contemptuous of his fellow Africans who raided the villages to kidnap their brothers and sisters to the sell white traders. He himself was kidnapped by one of these traitors.

> I must own, to the shame of my own countrymen, that I was first kid-napped and betrayed by some of my own complexion, who were the first cause of my exile and slavery. (12)

But he quickly adds that "if there were no buyer, there would be no sellers" (12). The ultimate responsibility for slavery lies with the Europeans who were the ones who developed, perfected and profited from it.

Cugoano - like Armah was to do in his fictional work Two Thousand Seasons published two hundred years later - condemned the slave hunters and portrayed them as despicable creatures who had been corrupted by Europeans.

> These kidnappers and slave procurers, called merchants, are a species of African villains, which are greatly corrupted, and even viciated by their intercourse with the Europeans; but, wicked and barbarous as they certainly are, I can hardly think, if they knew what horrible barbarity they were sending their fellow-creatures to, that they would do it. But the artful Europeans have so deceived them, that they are bought by their inventions of merchandize, and beguiled into it by their artifice; for the Europeans, at their factories, in some various manner, have always kept some as servants to them. (26)

There is the specious argument that because some Africans themselves took part in raids to enslave their brothers and sisters, slavery could not be terribly hated by Africans or that Africans themselves condoned slavery. Such insidious reasoning could never lessen the crime of slavery nor the dimension of the tragedy to Africans.

Western slave traders with their African collaborators raided and destroyed villages laying waste to their material and spiritual cultures. The

> forts and factories [are] a den of desperadoes, where they may ensnare, entrap and catch men. So that Africa has been robbed of its inhabitants; its free-born sons and daughters have been stolen, and kidnapped, and violently taken away, and carried into captivity and cruel bondage. (93)

Cugoano took up the issue of western imperialism in Africa and other parts of the world. Going beyond the African experience, he noted that North and South American native Indians were victims of unparalleled brutality. The Spanish were "merciless depredators" who went to South America and visited such cruelty on the native Indians as "would make humanity tremble" (82). These Spanish invaders murdered and looted cities and graves in Peru. Anywhere European imperialists visited, they left in their tracks of destruction, plunder, pain and death. The colonies in Africa, Asia and the Americas "were founded on murders and devastations" (77).

Cugoano extended his protest against slavery and imperialism to religion. He inaugurated the tradition of condemning the negative activities of the missionaries while affirming the positive values of true Christianity. He maintained a distinction between the Christianity which, in his opinion, is full of benign and unconditional love and one which is exploitative and used for enslavement and colonisation.

> I would have my African countrymen to know that and understand that the destroyers and enslavers of men can be no Christians; for Christianity is the system of benignity and love, and all its votaries are devoted to honesty, justice, humanity, and meekness, peace and good-will to all men .... For the enslavers and oppressors of men, among those that have obtained the name of Christians, they are still acting as its greatest enemies, and contrary to all its genuine principles; they should therefore be called the opposite, the Antichrist. (84)

Too many of those who profess to be Christians engage in activities which are contrary to Christian principles. Thus Cugoano examines the role of Christians in relation to slavery and imperialism, issues that are at the heart of much of modern African writing.

In an apocalyptic vision Cugoano declares that the Lord was aware of the suffering of Africans:

> And methinks I hear now, many of my country men in complexion, crying and groaning under the yoke of slavery and bondage, and praying to be delivered; and the word of the Lord is thus speaking for them, while they are bemoaning themselves under the grievous bond of their misery and woe. (75)

He is hopeful that the emancipation of Africans from slavery would be according to the prophecy of Christian liberation. Africans, Cugoano intimated, would attain redemption through the beneficent power of God.

> Yet, O African! Yet, poor slave! The day of the watchmen cometh, and thy visitation draweth nigh, that shall be their perplexity. Therefore I will look unto the Lord; and I will wait for the God of my Salvation; my God will hear me .... Mine eyes shall behold them trodden down as the mire of the streets. In the day that the walls of deliverance are to be built, in that day shall be the decree of slavery be far removed. (76)

According to Cugoano, Western nations ought to make restitution for their sins against Africans. He demands that slave trading nations like Britain declare days of mourning and beg for forgiveness from God. Further, he believes that Britain and the other European nations should promote education in Africa. As long as slavery continued and as long as the Europeans condoned it their claim to civilisation and progress would be hollow. He asks, would these European slave trading nations accept this practice if their sons and daughters were enslaved by Africans?

Cugoano condemns western institutions which have had a debilitating impact on Africa, a theme that has been taken up with urgency in later African writing. European rulers had the power to abolish slavery but would not do so since they as much as the slave merchants profit from it. Cugoano condemns the British parliament for its tolerance of slavery. It shared with the slave traders the responsibilty for the murder of Africans and the carnage in Africa and on the American plantations. Slavery should concern all, even those who were not directly involved in the trade.

> While ever such a horrible business as the slavery and oppression of the Africans is carried on, there is not one man in all Great Britain and her colonies that knoweth anything of it, can be innocent and safe, unless he speedily riseth up with abhorrence of it in his own judgement, and to avert evil, declare himself against it, and all such notorious wickedness. (103)

Cugoano invalidates some the key arguments that were advanced in support of slavery. For example, slave trade was defended with citations from the Bible (Genesis 4:15; 9:22-27): Africans were said to be the descendants from Ham who was cursed by his own father, Noah, to suffer. Cugoano dismisses this argument as malicious and wicked. Africans were not living under any curse placed on Ham by Noah. In any case the supposed descendents of Ham included Europeans and Asians. Why was it that it was only Africans who must suffer under Noah's curse? Cugoano also dismissed as racist propaganda the myth that Africans were sub-humans and therefore could be enslaved.

Cugoano undermines all aspersions about black inferiority.

> The external blackness of the Ethiopians, is as innocent and natural, as the spots in the leopards; and that the difference of color and complexion, which in [it] hath pleased God to appoint among men, are no more unbecoming unto either of them, than the

> different shades of the rainbow are unseemingly to the whole, or unbecoming to any part of the apparent arch. It does not alter the nature and quality of a man, whether he wears a black or white coat, whether he puts it on or strips it off, he is still the same man. (47)

Neither skin color nor texture of hair can determine a person's character and morality. But, black people have been subjected to the most cruel treatment because of these features.

Africans, Cugoano notes, are as capable and intelligent as any other race. Cugoano calls for the general education of Africans and instructions in the true teachings of Christ. Ex-slaves could be sent back to Africa to teach "useful learning and the knowledge of Christian religion" (132). Slaves on plantations in the West Indies should be freed immediately and the ex-slaves could become wage-earners.

Cugoano believes in the liberating power of education. With education Africans could be in control of their own society. As an ex-slave, writing not only gave Cugoano an effective voice, it also enabled him to demonstrate the capabilities of a liberated mind. He stated his protest and his ideas with confidence.

Cugoano's writing serves well to undermine the spurious arguments about black inferiority and to rally support for the anti-slavery movement. Thoughts is a polemical discourse written to expose slavery and also to generate positive attitudes toward black people. The author advances valid arguments in an attack on pro-slavery advocates. Thoughts is not a purely fictional work; it is primarily an eye-witness account. But the major issues of this book are central to African imaginative writing.

This early Ghanaian writer deserves special mention in Ghanaian letters. Like most of his compatriots who were kidnapped and enslaved, he retained memories of his homeland and in Thoughts he shared his great love for the African people. Cugoano's book must be considered as an important contribution to the literary and political history of black people. This book prefigures many of the major concerns of modern African writing. Cugoano's statements about race, pride, identity and liberation anticipated much of the writings by Africans and Africans in the diaspora; these phonomena continue to be of tremendous interest in contemporary literature. The subjects of slavery, African history and anti-imperialism have become the engaging issues in contemporary African literature. The thrust of Thoughts is positive and affirmative toward authentic African values, confrontational toward those who threaten the African tradition and offensive against those who undermine or harm African people.

Casely-Hayford's "Ethiopia Unbound"

Like his compatriot Cugoano, Casely Hayford's life and writing were committed to teaching black people everywhere to be proud of themselves and also to educate the rest of the world about black achievement and civilisation. In his polemical writings, Casely-Hayford reflects deeply on African identity. Africa, he argues, has a history to be proud of. The last few centuries of confusion brought about by colonialism, racism and assimilation do not represent the entire history of Africa. Western histories of Africa have been full of misrepresentation and distortions. Casely-Hayford rejects the popular western view of Africans as backward, barbaric and cruel. Myths about black inferiority were cited to advance racial and colonial domination. Once the humanity of the black person was doubted, there were few who would question the inhuman treatment of Africans.

Casely-Hayford speaks against the exploitation of and cruelty to black people and he has no illusions about the enormity of the task of winning justice for the black person:

> Until white world opinion becomes radically and basically changed in the direction of respecting the common civic rights of Africans generally, it is but a waste of breath to preach saintliness and self-mastery to Africans.[5]

This early Ghanaian writer implores Africans to go back to pre-colonial freedom and self-respect. He prefers the indigenous African tradition to the material culture of the European society. However, Casely-Hayford has some appreciation for western technology: moving back to the past is to be done with the advantages of western technology. But this education has to be relevant in the African context.

Casely-Hayford goes beyond the affirmation of Gold Coast nationalism to uphold West African and African nationalist movements. He is keenly aware of Pan-African struggles all over the world and therefore advocates a new order that would ensure that black people everywhere would achieve total freedom.

The concept of African personality, a positive humanistic philosophy which is based on the African tradition, was developed in the fictional work Ethiopia Unbound. Ethiopia, the only black African country to escape European colonialism, became for Casely-Hayford a symbol of black freedom and aspiration. The protagonist of this book, Kwamankra, is said to have been modelled after the career of the author. In a sense, his chief character becomes the voice of this early Ghanaian nationalist as he attempts to rebut racist arguments about Africans. Kwamankra is a Pan-Africanist who has studied in Britain and has returned to the Gold Coast to campaign for change in his society and to fight for dignity and self-respect. He is contrasted with his school-mate, the ironically-named Whitely who has come to the Gold Coast as a colonial chaplain.

Casely-Hayford followed other African writers in expressing concern about the predicament of Africans and Africans in the diaspora. He noted in the chapter "Race

Emancipation - Particular Considerations: African Nationality":

> Whether in the east, south, or west of the African continent, or yet among the teeming millions of Ethiopia's sons in America, the cry of the African, in its last analysis, is for the scope and freedom in the struggle for existence.[6]

Casely-Hayford was knowledgeable about the works of contemporary black intellectuals. So in Ethiopia Unbound, Kwamankra visits Hampton, U.S.A. in 1907 and speaks at the African National University about the works of Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois and Wilmot Blyden. The protagonist criticises both Washington and Du Bois for being provincial and therefore limited since they are only concerned with the problems of black people in America. He endorses the position of Edward Blyden who he judges to be an internationalist. Blyden calls on Africans in the diaspora to go back to their true roots:

> Afro-Americans must bring themselves in touch with some of the general tradition and institutions of their ancestors, and though sojourning in a strange land, endeavour to conserve the characteristics of the race. (165)

Also, Kwamankra rejects Du Bois' ideas [The Souls of Black Folks] that black people are straddled between double consciousness:

> an American, a negro, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings, two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (180)

African-Americans, unlike the Hebrews in Egypt, were unable to preserve their language, manners, customs, religions and household gods.[7] However, Kwamankra appears to have contradicted himself when he calls on Africans in America to assert their African identity and to see their presence in America as temporary, "sojourning in a strange land." African-Americans are urged to imbibe "all that is best in western culture in the land of their oppressors, yet remaining true to racial instincts and inspiration, customs and institutions" (173). It seems that Kwamankra advocates the double consciousness that Du Bois speaks of.

Casely-Hayford's nationalist commitment is strongly expressed in Ethiopia Unbound. He compares African and western institutions and clearly shows a preference for the former. Kwamankra calls for the establishment of a national university in each African country and for the teaching of indigenous African languages such as Fante and Hausa. An early advocate of African values, Kwamankra is aware of the importance of external symbols. In the national universities, he suggests, national attires instead of western academic gowns should be worn.

> The distinctive garb of students, male and female, was national with an adaptability suggestive of the advanced state of society. It was recognized that the best part of the

> teaching must be done in the people's own language, and soon several text-books of known authority had, with the kind permission of authors and publishers, been translated into Fanti [and other African languages], thereby making the progress of the student rapid and sound. (17)

western education has contributed to "denationaling" the African. Kwamankra questions how an educated African could maintain his individuality and identity if he is not familiar with his own history and customs. How can the black person be taken seriously when all he does is to "ape" white manners and assimilate white values?

Kwamankra, however, recognises the contribution of Western education reformers like A.G. Fraser who, during his service in the Gold Coast, supported the use of local languages for instruction in the colonies. In addition, this protagonist of Ethiopia Unbound calls for the translation of scientific studies and classical texts into Fanti. As a matter of fact, in the chapter "A Similitude: The Greek and The Fanti," Kwamankra teaches his son, Ekra Kwow, about the parallels between Fanti and Greek culture:

> The gods of Fanti mix to-day as freely with mortals as did Proteus, Poseidon, or Athene, the daughter of Zeus; and their offices are the same, for, if men paid heed, they would still gather inspiration for their action as in the days when Athene came down from Olympus. (204)

Thus Casely-Hayford goes to the foundations of western culture to establish an analogy with Fanti civilization and to demonstrate that his own indigenous culture is as solid and vibrant as any other.

Through Kwamankra, Casely-Hayford rebuts racist arguments about Africans. This Ghanaian nationalist also censures the colonial administration and the missionaries in Ethiopia Unbound and portrays the colonial adminstration as corrupt and callous:

> With the gin bottle in one hand and the Bible in the other, [the colonial administrator] urges moral excellence, which, in his heart of hearts, he knows to be impossible of attainment by the African under the circumstances; and when the latter fails, his benevolent proctector makes such a failure a cause for dismembering his tribe, alienating his lands, appropriating his goods, and sapping the foundations of his authority and institutions. (69)

This cynicism about the colonial administration seems to be general in the colonial administration. For instance, one of the fictional characters, Mr. Bilcox, condemns some of his colleagues who altruistically work for the progress of Ghanaians. In the words of Mr. Bilcox, such people are "a mere handful of white fools who are blind enough not to see where the bread is buttered and who advocate equal rights for the natives and all that sort of tommy rot" (78).

The church sent missionaries who served as "soldiers" in the interest of colonialism. Just as Cugoano observes in Thoughts, Casely-Hayford also points out that, the so-called Christian nations never treated their colonies according to the common standards of morality or decency. In his personal notes Kwamankra inquires about "how far the conduct of Christian nations in relation to aboriginal races, conformed to the Christian standard of morality" (95).

The missionary, Whitely, sees black people as "nothing but a pack of dishonest people" (81). This colonial chaplain believes that a "natural gulf" (83) separates him and his likes from the local Ghanaian people. He institutes apartheid in all spheres of social and church life and even rules that "on no account would [Europeans] commingle their dead with the dead of 'niggers'" (83). Whitely demandes that "European and native cemetaries" be separated by a "path, thirty-six feet wide" (84).

The church and its functionaries are thus satirised. Kwamankra describes the choir master in the following manner:

> In his elegantly cut-away black morning coat and beautifully-glazed cuffs and collar, not to speak of patent leather shoes, which he kept spotlessly bright by occasionally dusting them with his pocket handkerchief, tucked away in his shirt sleeves, he certainly looked a veritable 'swell,' but he also did look a veritable fool.
>
> And this was the sum total of half a century of missionary zeal and effort. (73-74)

Casely-Hayford's subject in Ethiopia Unbound was the state of the African, whom he saw as capable of retaining his identity in spite of centuries of slavery, colonization and racism. He advocated Pan-Africanism and the development of African personality which he believed would lead to liberation and development. These ideas were taken up with great fervour by the father of Ghana's independence, Nkrumah, and, by Armah and other post-Independence Ghanaian writers. Casely-Hayford continued the tradition of affirming positive African values in furtherance of nationalism. Nigerian critic F. Nnabuenyi Ugonna in an introduction to the 1969 edition of Ethiopia Unbound, praised the book for promoting positive African values.

> Ethiopia Unbound is undoubtedly one of the most important contributions to the literature of African nationalism. Although it is primarily a work of fiction and so properly belongs to the field of African literature, it contains ideas that are indispensable to all those interested in African studies. (xix)

Ethiopia Unbound is one of the earliest works to give literary treatment to the philosophy of African personality.

Armah: "Two Thousand Seasons" and the Philosophy of "The Way"

Though separated by two centuries, there are strong affinities between Armah, Casely-Hayford and Cugoano. The issues addressed in both Cugoano's personal narrative and Casely-Hayford's semi-autobiography constitute the subject of Armah's fictional work, Two Thousand Seasons. This contemporary novelist, like his precursors, deals with the the history of the slave trade, colonialism and the destruction of the African tradition. Armah is also a militant Pan-Africanist and Two Thousand Seasons is his artistic statement on the cause of Pan-Africanism and nationalism. He attempts to dispel wrong assumptions about Africa's history, advocates adjustment of the way we apprehend the past and calls for an assertion of the true African tradition. Armah uses details from the indigenous tradition to demonstrate its vitality, to make a statement about the African way of life and to serve his artistic vision.

Armah takes a stand in favor of genuine African value systems and compels everyone to clarify his position; this polarisation among readers and critics is also the direction of his art. Armah makes the following statement in Why Are We So Blest:

> Why not simply accept the fate of an artist, and like a Western seer, close my eyes to every thing around, find relief in discreet beauty, and make its elaboration my vocation? Impossible .... I hear the call of that art too. But in the world of my people that most important first act of creation, that rearrangement without which all attempts at creation are doom to falseness remains to be done. Europe hurled itself against us - not for creation, but to destroy us, to use us for creating itself. America, a growth out of Europe, now deepens that destruction. In this wreckage there is no creative art outside the destruction of the destroyers. In my people's world, revolution would be the only art, revolutionaries the only creators. All else is part of Africa's destruction.[8]

It is probable that Armah is defining his own role as an artist. In Two Thousand Seasons, there is no doubt about his aggressive feelings toward those who harm the African people. Armah dramatises the contradictions in African history and leaves no doubt about his interpretation of this history or of his determination to project the true values of the African people. This dialectical opposition in art is also very effectively captioned in Ngugi's Writers In Politics: "Every writer is a writer in politics. The only question is what and whose politics".[9]

Anyidoho rightly observes:

> In Armah's visionary world, we are not offered the chance of seeking refuge in any neutral zones. There are no such zones in the world of Two Thousand Seasons. We must participate in a clear-cut opposition between the devotees of death and a people devoted to survival and to life.[10]

Armah posits the philosophy of "the way," "the living way," "our way" as the source of authentic African values. "The way" encapsulates Armah's artistic vision; it is a philosophical construct and a metaphor for his artistic endeavour in Two Thousand Seasons.

> Our vocation goes against all unconnectedness. It is a call to create the way again, and where even the foundations have been assaulted and destroyed, where restoration has been made impossible. Simple to create the way.[11]

"The way" serves as a conceptual framework for the entire novel, embodying Armah's view of history and commitment.

Armah does not define "the way" directly or in precise terms. Instead, its attributes are manifested throughout the novel and experienced by black people, the people of Anoa, according to Armah. The meaning of "the way" emerges from the narrative process. In a sense, increase in knowledge of "the way" deepens our understanding of the novel, and indeed, Armah's philosophy. Thus the search for the meaning of "the way" becomes the process of interpretation of Two Thousand Seasons.

As a positive affirmation, "the way" is community, reciprocity, connectedness and fruition. The negation of its principles leads to fragmentation, destruction and death.

> Our way is reciprocity. The way is wholeness. Our way knows no oppression. Our way is hospitable to guests. The way repels destroyers; the way destroys oppression. Our way produces before it consumes. The way produces far more than it consumes. Our way creates. The way destroys our destruction. (62)

"The way" is represented by Anoa, a figure of the female principle and a principal seer of black people. According to this prophetess:

> The way is not the rule of men. The way is never women ruling men. The way is reciprocity. The way is not bareness. Nor is the way this needless fecundity. The way is not blind productivity. The way is creation knowing its purpose, wise in the withholding of itself from snares, from destroyers. (27)

"The way" must lead toward Anoa. But for several hundred years black people have strayed from the ways of "the way"; they have spent long and tiring seasons groping for their true way. Anoa predicts two thousand seasons of suffering, death and destruction:

> Two thousand seasons: a thousand you will spend descending into the abysses that would stop your heart and break your mind merely to contemplate. The climb away from there will be just as heavy. For that alone can you be glad your doors have so closed, your faculties are now so blunted. You will need them blunter still, to make less perceptible the descent of a thousand seasons. Two thousand seasons: a thousand dry, a thousand moist. (25)

Africans have spent hundreds of years "wandering amazed along alien roads" (xv). The great wandering of black people involved a treacherous journey across the desert, during which they encountered dangerous beasts and hostile Arabs and suffered famine. The desert as Armah reveals in his prologue only "takes" and "knows no giving .... There the devotees of death take life, consume it, exhaust everything" (ix). The desert represents destruction: "It is a carrier of death" (xi). Spring water "runs dry" (xi) and all species are threatened.

In their migration across the desert black people face the onslaught of fierce Arabs. These Arabs, as Armah shows, are welcomed by the people of Anoa, but they betray and murder their hosts. In contrast to other African writers (Senghor and Laye), Armah recognises that the Arab factor in African history is no less disastrous than is the Western involvement after it. The Ghanaian writer attacks both

Christianity and Islam for their destructive impact on Africa.

In Two Thousand Seasons, Arabs are portrayed as hedonists who satiate themselves with sex, sodomy and rape. In the chapter "The Ostentatious Cripple," Armah describes Arabs who engage in unrelenting massacre and who turn "women [of Anoa] into play things for their decayed pleasure" (31). Armah writes about their preferred "sports":

> Great was the pleasure of ... Arab predators as with extended tongue they vied to see who could with the greatest ease scoop out buttered dates stuck cunningly into the genitals of our women lined up for just this their pleasant competition. From the same fragment vessels they preferred the eating of other delicious food: meat balls still warm off the the fire, their heat making our women squirm, with a sensousness all the more inflamatory to the predators' desire. The dawa drug itself the predators licked lovingly from the youngest virgin genitals -- licked with a furious appetite. (33)

These are the activities of the people who "know nothing of reciprocity. The road to death --- that is their road" (11).

The next thousand seasons witness the succession of the death dealing Arabs by White predators. Betrayal and breach of faith also characterised black people's experience with these visitors from across the sea. Together with their local collaborators, these whitemen unleashed another millenium of "the destruction of souls, the killing of bodies, the infusion of violence into every breath, every drop, every morsel of your sustaining air, your water, your food" (26-27).

Immediately, following their arrival in Africa the destroyers from the sea "killed half the people of the town and built a stone house for themselves on the hill closest to the sea" (120). Then they waged war on all living things and even inanimate objects: they seized and transported black people to "new places beyond the sea" (129); they razed down mountains in search of precious metals; they slaughtered elephants for their tusks and they appropriated the most fertile lands and forced the indigenous people to do manual labor. For several hundreds of years, the people of Anoa fought battles to eliminate white destroyers and their local allies. One of the heroes of Anoa people, the legendary Isanusi explains that fighting against the invaders is just and necessary.

> It is not our destiny to flee the predator's thrust, nor to seek hiding places from destroyers left triumphant; but to turn against the predators advancing, turn against the destroyers, and bending all our soul against their thrust, turning every strategem of the destroyers against themselves, destroy them. That is our destiny: to end destruction --- utterly; to begin the highest, the profoundest work of creation, the work that is inseparable from our way, inseparable from the way. (246)

Armah's depiction of Arabs and Whites as death dealing predators has provoked some of the most heated battles in African literary criticism. He has been accused of reverse racism, racial chauvinism and historical inaccuracy. Critics such as Bernth Lindfors, Kirsten Holst Peterson, Eustace Palmer and Derek Wright have led this charge and have questioned Armah's objectivity and credibility. These critics are troubled by what they perceive as his simplistic equation of whiteness with death and destruction, and blackness with life and creativity. According to Palmer, Armah has a "strong racial consciousness".[12]

Peterson is blunt in her condemnation of Armah's novel: "the overall credibility of Two Thousand Seasons suffers from the naive opposition between absolute good and the ultimate evil and from the idealisation of the African".[13] Further, "when everything is seen in the light of a black, good/white, evil dichotomy one wonders what is the purpose of it. A reaffirmation of racism?"[14] Wright labels Two Thousand Seasons "a therapeutic exorcism" (234) which involves "a systematic hatred directed at Arab and European whites".[15]

Lindfors is also severe in his condemnation of Armah. He objects vehemently to what he sees as Armah's literary warfare on White people. He denounces the Ghanaian writer for his "cartoon ... history"[16] and for his advocacy of "black ethnocentricism" (88). According to Lindfors, Armah "overschematizes the past" and idealizes his portrait of Africans. He concludes that "Armah's delirious fantasies pushed [Two Thousand Seasons] beyond the dimensions of a viable myth into the wilder liberties of nightmare"(90).

√

The major premise of these criticisms is flawed. It is a gross misinterpretation to reduce Two Thousand Seasons to such simplistic divisions. The issues are not so clear-cut. Armah condemns Arab and White destroyers and their Black allies. It is puzzling why these critics are troubled by Armah's attack on Arab and White predators, but are silent about the negative depiction of African collaborators (the askaris and zombis) of the slave traders. Unlike his critics who are selective with whom they empathise, Armah attacks all who violate the rules of "the way".

Anyidoho shows insight when he states:

> There are indeed no good or beautiful Whites in this novel, but we are not offered a simplistic choice between Whites and Blacks. Armah's fierce rhetoric is even more relentless in depicting Blacks who have become part of destruction's forces. One recalls the catalog of idiotic kings, with their ultimate heir Koranche, whose portrait is probably the most fully developed of any in the book. Not a single one of them is presented in a positive light. The askaris receive an even less sympathetic treatment. Armah's metaphorical diagnosis of their special disease is in the image of servitude, sleep and death: zombis. (116)

There is no doubt about the abrasiveness of Armah's art. Nor does he discriminate in his attack on betrayers and destroyers. Armah condemns the death-dealing Arabs and Whites and the likes of Koranche, Kamuzu and Bradford George, the African traitors. None is spared. There might be a feeling of discomfort with Armah's attack because of its intensity, but he is against all exploiters, whether they be foreigners or indigenous people.

The Ghanaian novelist seems to have anticipated the concerns of some of his critics when he announces through his fictional character, Isanusi, that the anger of the people of Anoa is measured and their cause is just.

> This has been no useless explosion of rage animating us, hurling us singly into the brief, senseless acts of momentary, particular revenge. In us has been the need to spend life, against the present killing arrangements ... to spend life cutting through deceiving superficialities to reach again the essential truth the destroyers must hide from the spirit if their white road is to prevail; to spend life acting on the truth against destruction's whiteness; to spend life working with our people, searching for paths to our way. (246)

Armah literally strips bare the truth about the African past which has been concealed beneath layers of western myths. His language is blunt and accurate. Neither does he conceal his message beneath pointless ambiguities nor does he worry about propriety. Armah's abrasiveness is necessary; to attain "the essential truth," he must "cut through deceiving superficialities" which are routinely offered as accounts of the African history.

Armah has also received negative criticism for his use of hyperbole, repetition and fantasy. Lindfors and Peterson criticise him for inaccuracy and for the lack of verisimilitude. However, the very presence of these elements in Two Thousand Seasons is a testimony to its artistic excellence. Armah has only made use of his poetic license, the privileges that artist from all traditions and locations exercise. He himself has no illusions about the reaches of art. Verity is only a possibility in creative art. The collective narrative voice in Armah's novel declares:

> What we do not know we do not claim to know .... We have no need to claim to know .... We have thought it better to start from sure knowledge, call fables fables, and wait till clarity. (5)

In his essay "Beyond Self-Depreciation and Racism: Versions of African History in Bound to Violence and Two Thousand Seasons," Abioseh Porter offers an eloquent defense of Armah's novel.

> It is remarkable that though critics have generally and correctly pointed out the presence of exaggeration and distortion in [Two Thousand Seasons and Bound To Violence], a good number of the critics seem to forget that hyperbole and distortion have been essential ingredients in various forms of literature (oral and written) from the earliest times. From passages such as those depicting the exploits of peoples as different as the Israelites in the Bible, the Romans in Virgil's Aeneid, and Africans in works such as Soundjiata and Chaka (to name just a few examples), it can be seen that an effective use of exaggeration and the grotesque has been a major factor for the success of certain literary classics dealing with the history of a people.[17]

According to Porter, Armah uses techniques which are basic to creative writing. He advises critics of Armah (and

Ouologuem) to use "a less racially defensive and a more literary approach" (13).

To censure, for example, Alexander Pope's "The Dunciad" merely because of the use of exaggeration is to demand a different poem or poet. To eliminate the fantastic and gross in The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born is to sanitise this novel. Similarly, the vitality of Two Thousand Seasons lies in Armah's departure from strict verisimilitude.

It is needless to mention that Two Thousand Seasons is not a documentation of African history. Even real historical accounts give only a partial view of an event; history involves a process of selection. Each historical account bears the imprint of such factors as the historian's perspective, skills, ideology and also available data.

> There is no such thing as a complete history, a history which represents the past as it truly was. The past as total experience of a people remains an unretrievable whole of which various accounts of history can only provide more or less accurate fragments. Nor is there any such thing as "the" history of a people. There is only a plurality of histories, each offering its special permutation of selected details, each serving the ideological needs of one group or another. History, whether recorded or remembered, is always a process of selection and omission. Sometimes, the picture history offers us is partly determined by the circumstances over which the historian has but little control. Thus one can talk of the inaccessibility of accurate details, sometimes resulting from destruction of historical landmarks or from loss of memory by informants, especially in the case of oral histories. (Anyidoho, 109-110)

The nineteenth century French novelist, Stendhal, declared that the novelist is a historian on horseback. The novelist is prone to a lesser extent than the historian to grasp but a minor fragment of a phenomenon. But it does not mean the novelist's interpretation of a historical event is any less significant than that of the historian. As a matter of fact, if one goes by what classical scholars claim, one might rate the former as being more capable of apprehending a substantive meaning of events than the latter. In the Poetics, Aristotle declares that poets are capable of attaining higher truths than historians:

> A poet's object is not to tell what actually happened but what could and would happen either probably or inevitably .... The real difference [between a historian and a poet] is this, that one tells what happened and the other what might happen. For this reason poetry is something more scientific and serious than history, because poetry tends to give general truths while history gives particular facts.[18]

The novelist presents events without any special obligation to maintain strict verisimilitude. Instead, he molds them to correspond with his artistic vision. In Two Thousand Seasons, Armah's subject is African history, but he diminishes the importance of empiricism. He subverts and at the same time elevates history to the level of myth. Armah's recall of African history is linked with his remembrance of the myth of origin of Black people.

In his excellent essay, "Myth and Modern Fiction: Armah's Two Thousand Seasons" Isidore Okpewho contends that in his novel, Armah gives a "historic moment or cultural act a semiotic value in the illustration of a chosen idea".[19] Armah imposes order on events and consciously shapes them to correspond with vision. His perspective is African centered.

Armah, like other writers (especially his fellow Africans and Africans in the diaspora), reaches deeply into his self and his past in order to present his people's experience. He has responded to the challenge which he and many of his fellow writers declare: African writers must "heal the wound in the soul"[20]; and they should "search through the debris of [Africa's] history for pieces with which to build the true self in his own image".[21]

Africa's historical trauma has provided impetus for Two Thousand Seasons (as it has for Things Fall Apart, A Grain of Wheat, etc.) To present the African experience Armah must also expose western myths about Africa. He condemns the distortions of African history in most western accounts:

> The air everywhere around is poisoned with truncated tales of our origin. That is also part of the wreckage of our people. What has been cast abroad is not a thousandth of our history even if its quality were truth. The people called our people are not the hundredth of our people. But the haze of this fouled world exists to wipe out knowledge of our way, the way. These mists are here to keep us lost, the destroyers' easy prey. (Two Thousand Seasons, 1-2)

The history books are full of partial accounts about the African past and many of them are written from a western perspective. Many African scholars and Africanists, Cheik Anta Diop, Franz Fanon, Douglas Killam, Dorothy Hammond and

Alta Jablow, to name a few, have condemned the western distortion of African history. This misrepresentation is summed up in The Africa That Never Was, by Hammond and Jablow:

> Four hundred years of writing about Africa have produced a literature which describes not Africa but the British response to it. The literature persistently recounts the fantasy of the Englishman in confrontation with Africa. As in a morality play, the British and the Africans are the exemplars of civilization and savagery respectively ... The image of Africa remains the negative reflection, the shadow, of the British self image.[22]

Thomas Knipp also defines some of the stereotypical myths that characterise the European perception of Africa:

> This is a myth of conceptual polarities. On the one hand exist those values which are white, civilised, rational, progressive (even millenial), creative and European; on the other are black, savage, instinctual, repressive (even atavistic) destructive and African. Within the context of these perceived values, the history of the relationship between Europeans and Africans emerges as the history of the imposition of European values on benighted Africans for mutual benefit.[23]

Western creative writers (Joseph Conrad, Ridder Haggard, Joyce Cary, etc.) routinely present Africa as the context for elemental struggles, both physical and psychological; a place where only their inherited civilisation can save Europeans from the characteristic darkness of Africa. The challenge for African writers (Achebe, Armah and Awoonor, for example) is to expose this propaganda and to present the true African experience.

Armah explains in Two Thousand Seasons:

> We have not found that lying trick to our taste, the trick of making up sure knowledge of things possible to think of, things possible to wonder about but impossible to know in any such ultimate way. We are not stunted in spirit, we are not Europeans, we are not Christians that we should invent fables a child would laugh at and harden our eyes to preach them daylight and deep night as truth. We are not so warped in soul, we are not Arabs, we are not Muslims to fabricate a desert god chanting madness in the wilderness, and call our creature. That is not our way. (4)

Instead, Two Thousand Seasons is based on remembrances from the collective memory, beginning with Africa's history to the present and with a vision of the future. Armah's account is based on remembered knowledge; knowledge that has prevailed in spite of the disinformation campaign of the West:

> Drawing from remembrance, from knowledge of future purpose, it is for the hearers to listen, for the hearers to glean what through accident death's messengers have not found to silence. (xiv-xv)

Throughout their history black people have managed to keep alive the memory of their collective identity. This knowledge comes from the repository of the African tradition; it is knowledge by intuition:

> This land is ours, not through murder, not through theft, not by way of violence or any other trickery. This has always been our

> land. Here we began. Here we will continue even after the thousand seasons' scattering and the thousand season's groping through the white death ...always seeks one end: our extermination. Our clearest remembrances begin with a home before we came near the desert of the falling sun. (5)

The prophets in Two Thousand Seasons have prescience of the predicament of the people. The story about the origin of the people of Anoa is told in a series of prophetic utterances:

> We are not a people of yesterday. Do they ask how many single seasons we have flowed from our beginnings till now? We shall point them to the proper beginning of their counting. (1)

The message continues:

> We speak of the the central prophecy that heard the curse of our present coming before its violence burst upon heads, we speak of the vision that saw our scattering before the first shattering stroke exploded from the desert's white light --- of destruction's two thousand seasons against us. (19)

The central seer, Anoa, also speaks:

> The sounds came clear, lasted for repetition, and made error impossible. Anoa's utterance was not a shrieking fear of ignorant of causes, oblivious of results, but a whole, clear utterance holding back neither blame for the two thousand seasons of destruction nor the promise of the way discoverable again at the end of many seasons of our exile. (21)

Anoa predicts "two thousand seasons of destruction" consisting of "a thousand dry, a thousand moist" (25). The prophets and seers keep alive knowledge of the collective identity of black people. Armah's novel is based on black experience as lived according to prophecy. Thus informed, with remembered knowledge, Armah attempts to subvert the western version of African history.

The Ghanaian author also offers a corrective vision of the way some Africans interpret their history. He rejects the tradition of those griots and court singers who bestow underserved praises on leaders who in most instances work against the people. Armah dispenses with the practise of many African historians and writers (such as Senghor) who idealise the past. He reveals (and so does Achebe) that the past has its beauty as well as ugliness.

In Two Thousand Seasons, Armah is scornful of Kamuzu, a buffoon who "found an old singer with a high racing voice to sing for him and a hireling drummer [to] beat out the works on mercernary skin for his flattery" (97). He lashes out at the ancient Malian, Mansa Kanka Musa, ironically referred to as "the Golden One" who in 1324 A.D., went on a pilgrimage to Mecca:

> Have we forgotten the stupid pilgrimage of the one surnamed -- O, ridiculous pomp --- The Golden One: he who went across the desert from his swollen capital twenty days journey from where we lived; he who went with slaves and servants hauling gold to astonish eyes in the desert. (97)

According to Armah, Mansa Musa's moronic journey to the Middle East opened a gateway into Africa, bringing adventures with "flaming greed that brought us pillage clothed in the idiocy of religion." Such rulers are no celebrants; they betrayed their people. Therefore Armah chastises African historians and griots who glorify these "ostentatious cripples" (97) and who perpetuate myths of the great Kingdoms of the past.

Armah denounces the négritudists' holistic residual yearning for Africanity in reaction to western brainwashing. Such nostalgic affirmation of an ideal African tradition has no place in Two Thousand Seasons. Going back to the past must not mean "blind groping backward along a nostalgic road" (233). Armah believes that certain vices of the present have roots in the past. History is a continuing experience and if Africans are to stop repeating their past errors, they must confront the past. In Two Thousand Seasons, Armah goes back to the past all right, but only to select ideals and values to which the contemporary society might aspire.

In consonance with his use of history, Armah constructs a counter myth to interpret Africa's experience. In place of the distorted accounts and half-truths about African history, he offers an alternative epic narrative of the long and tiring seasons of migration. Armah warns: "a people losing sight of origin are dead. A people deaf to purposes are lost" (xiii). Like Ngugi and Soyinka, Armah molds his novel in the form of a myth. But at the same time he moves away, much further than the Kenyan and Nigerian writers, from the actual rituals of the myth of creation. Armah extends the spatial and temporal constraints within which Ngugi and Soyinka, respectively, realise their Gikuyu and Yoruba myths. He creates a new myth to reflect the African experience, one that embraces the entire Pan-African and African world.

In Two Thousand Seasons, myth supplies the effective symbolic structure for Armah's interpretation of history. It is a force of the creative process which results in the novel, obviously, and which enables him to establish the philosophy of the way. He recreates the mythical story of the origin and experience of black people. Armah reconstructs myth to fit his vision and the result is a merging of myth and creativity to become mythopoiesis: the making of myth.

Mythopoiesis, Okpewho points out, is an act of creativity: "the ultimate resource and the object of mythopoiesis is imaginative or intellectual play".[24] He argues that Two Thousand Seasons is a mythical novel which departs from the old theory (Fraser, The Golden Bough) which sees myth as sacred tales. Armah, he points out, engages in myth-making in order to transcend "the constraints of "time-bound reality" (14).

According to Okpewho:

> By his attachment to history, therefore, Armah may be seen to have given up any need or desire for symbolic reading. This would have been true but for the amazing scope that he has given experience --- and scope is one of the real mainstays of myth-making. (14)

And so in Two Thousand Seasons, Armah transcends empirical reality and factual account to attain a higher order. Thomas Knipp reaches a similar conclusion about the use of myth for creativity:

> Myth, the larger construction that fuses concept and emotion is usually narrative: a story or a gathering of stories. When these stories are, or purport to be, a chronological and interpretative arrangement of actual events causally explained or connected, they are called history.[25]

Knipp adds: "History is myth; it is the reorganization of the past according to the needs of the present".[26]

The symbolic structure of Armah's novel reinforces the process of myth making. In furtherance of this, many of his characters (Okai, Soyinka, Irele, Isanusi and Nandi) are recognisable personages. Similarly, the hazardous desert crossing and the journey toward the treacherous coastline have symbolic importance. Drought, treachery and hardship are rites for the physical and spiritual initiation of the entire race. Also, the regular recourse to prophetic language is indicative of the attempt to rise beyond historical time-constraint reality. Thus, through mythopoeisis Armah defines his vision of Africa.

In Myth, Literature and the African World, Soyinka praises Two Thousand Seasons as a major effort to retrieve the values of the African tradition in order to define new directions for the contemporary African society: " ...the visionary reconstruction of the past for the purposes of a social direction".[27] According to Soyinka, Armah's objective is to re-define the values and perspectives of the present society:

> Armah's vision is a secular and humane vision despising alike the flatulence of religious piety and its proselytising aggressiveness, insisting on a strict selectivity from the past in designing the African future. (114)

Okpewho would agree with Soyinka's interpretation that Armah's relation with the African tradition is

> essentially one of combination of respect and irreverence. He accepts the stylistic and mythopoeic apparatus of oral culture, but demonstrates that its attitude is rather inadequate for coping with the problems of contemporary society. (Myth in Africa, 215)

Following the trend set by Cugoano and Casely-Hayford, Armah articulates the consciousness of his society in the process of change. Along with his commitment to promote positive values for contemporary African society, Armah reverts to the ways of Anoa. Okpewho explains:

> What Armah has done in his book is to identify one transcending concept --- "the way" --- stretch it over a massive landscape of time, within which the various events of black historical experience can be seen only

> as symbolic illustrations of the imminence of "the way". (14)

The concept of "the way" embodies collective identity. In Two Thousand Seasons, Armah emphasises collective identity and eschews individualism. He searches through the "debris of the African" past and selects the philosophy of "the way," an embodiment of the collective destiny; the right path.

Armah dramatises the futility of individual action in his earlier novels, The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born and Fragments. The protagonist of Armah's first novel, Man, is an unsatisfactory spokesperson who is caught in between competing interests. He is urged by his family to accept bribes, to become corrupt like most people, but is unwilling to compromise his integrity.

The "hero" of Fragments, Baako, a young educated Ghanaian finds himself out of favour with his peers because he cannot subscribe to their excessive obsession for material things. At the same time, he is harassed by his own family for failure to enrich himself, to buy big homes and cars. Baako's morally edifying position is ignored as he struggles to maintain his individuality in a society which expects him to conform to the current material ethics.

Individual action is ineffective and doomed to failure in these two novels. Positive resolution is deferred in The Beautyful Ones. In Fragments, Baako is fragmented and even becomes insane. Armah warns against excessive individualism:

> There is no humans born alone ...
> A piece of us, go
> and come, a piece of us
> There are no humans who walk this earth
> alone.
>
> Again, Armah cautions:
>
> A human being alone
> is a thing more sad than any lost animal
> and nothing destroys the soul like its
> aloneness.[28]

The entropy in The Beautyful Ones and Fragments is mostly due to individualism.

In Two Thousand Seasons, Armah promotes collective action as a force for the liberation of black people every where. Indeed, the artistic disposition throughout the novel is in furtherance of this principle. In characterisation, in narrative style and as well as general philosophy, the commitment is to the promotion of a collective destiny.

Characterisation is in relation to group experience; individual strength is dedicated to group interest. Armah's personages are multi-ethnic, drawn from different parts of Africa. He praises positive figures of the African liberation struggle: past (Moliwe, Sekela and Nandi) and present (Soyinka, Okai and Irele). Armah emphasises the difference between these people and another, the so-called heroes, whom he describes as single peacocks strutting against each other's glory.

The quest for group indentity is expressed through the adoption of a communal narrative voice. Anyidoho makes the following observation of Two Thousand Seasons:

> It is indeed remarkable that the word I occurs only in a rare situation, a situation in which it is directly rejected. The search for I which is so basic to most novels is not part of the universe of this work. (125)

The narrative "I," that most personal of pronouns, is rejected because it cannot adequately express the values of "the way". In effect "the way" is a leitmotif, serving as an anchor by which the narrative is secured. The collective voice is strengthened through the unity of single voices.

The rejection of marked individualism is dramatised in a striking scene when Abena, one of the intiates whom was betrayed by her King and sold into slavery, was asked why she did not try to save herself even though she knew of the plot:

> Save myself apart from all of us? Abena
>
> asked,
> silence.
> There is no self to save apart from all of us
> What would I have done with my life, alone, like a
> beast of prey. (174)

In this scene, individual action is integrated with the collective will as the people of Anoa struggle to discover "the way".

Throughout Two Thousand Seasons the proclivity to individual action and philosophy is condemned. Fragmentation is unnatural:

> Pieces cut off from their whole are nothing but dead fragments. From the unending stream of our remembrance the harbingers of death break off meaningless fractions. Their carriers bring us this news of shards. Their message: behold this paltriness; this is all your history. (2)

Armah warns, the individual is an easy prey to aggressors:

> Beware of the destroyers. It is their habit to cut off fingers from the hand itself uprooted from its parent body, calling each fallen piece a creature in itself, different from ears, eyes, noses, feel and entrails, other individual creature of their making. Is it a wonder we have been flung so far from the way? That our people are scattered even into the desert, across the sea, over and away from this land, and we have forgotten how to recognise ourselves. (2)

Once he is isolated the individual is easily defeated. Individualism can lead to destruction of even the self. At the same time the lack of continuity of knowledge can obliterate the sense of identity of the people and thus threaten their existence.

> Of what is revealed, all is in fragments. Much of it was completely lost in that ashen time, when loneliness, bringer of madness, nearly snapped the line of rememberers. (13)

Armah asks,

> How, in the absence of connectedness, would any knowledge have reached us .... How, in

> the absence of connectedness would our consciousness have come by any vision? (203)

As individuals, we "trapped ... in our smallest self" (13). Together, African people are connected to the past and present and envision their future as a common destiny. The reverse is unconnectedness, fractured vision, hearing, thoughts and action which are normally associated with predators.

> The disease of death, the white road, is also unconnected sight, the fractured vision that sees only the immediate present, that follows only present gain and separates the present from the past, the present from the future, strutting each passing day in its own hustling greed.
> The disease of death, the white road, is also unconnected hearing, the shattered hearing that listens only to today's brazen cacophony, takes direction from that alone and stays deaf to the whispers of those gone before, deaf to the soft voices of those yet unborn.
> The disease of death, the white road, is also unconnected thinking, the broken reason that thinks only of the immediate paths to the moments release, that takes no care to connect the present with past events, the present with future necessity. (12-13)

Extreme individualism can lead to internecine fighting. There is self-destruction in fragmentation when there is a lack of common purpose.

> A people are already trapped in spirit when they agree to the use of things to hurl against each other. The root of the disease is not in the things themselves but in the use of things; the disease is not in the

> abundance of things but relationships growing between users. (315)

The common adage that when two brothers fight they abandon their inheritance to strangers holds true in this novel as it has in Africa's past and present history.

While in The Beautyful Ones and Fragments, Armah presents his diagnosis of the cause of the atrophy in his society, in Two Thousand Seasons, he goes beyond the analyses in his earlier novels to issue the panacea to eliminate the malady. He makes a rousing call for collective action for common interest. Throughout Two Thousand Seasons the common African roots and the Pan-African identity of black people are readily affirmed.

Armah is aware that the debilitating effects of the past history of slavery and colonialism continue into the present. He shoots back at the purveyors of disinformation about Africa:

> That we the black people are one we know. Destroyers will travel long distances in their minds and out to deny you this truth. We do not argue with them, the fools. Let them presume to instruct us about ourselves. That too is in their nature. That too is in the flow of their two thousand seasons against us. (4)

It is crucial that as victims, black people must tell their story. Armah feels obligated to present the true version of his people's experience:

> The destroyed who retain the desire to remake themselves and act upon that desire remake themselves. The remade are pointers to the

> way, the way of remembrance, the way of knowing purpose. (xv)

The survival of the denigrated depends upon how they interpret their experiences. Their nightmares may continue unless they seek to understand them.

One is reminded of Achebe's maxim that unless Africans know where the rain started beating them they would not be able to dry themselves. Armah supports this philosophy;

> Our way begins from coherent understanding. It is a way that aims at preserving knowledge of the best way we have found to relate to each to each, each to all, ourselves to other peoples, all to our surroundings. If our individual lives have a worthwhile aim, that aim should be a purpose inseparable from the way. (61)

Throughout the years of fragmentation and wide dispersal, black people have kept alive the memory of their common African origin which has led to a continuity in awareness about a collective destiny. This collective action is a dynamic force to be harnessed for Pan-Africanism. The successful revolt of the youths of Anoa is indicative of the possibilities for black people when they act in common.

> There is indeed a great force in the world, a force spiritual and able to shape the physical universe, but that force is not something cut off, not something separate from ourselves. It is an energy in us, strongest in our working, breathing, thinking together as one people; weakest when we are scattered, confused, broken into individual, unconnected fragments. (151)

With each person working together for the common welfare, black people can hopefully overcome their present adversities.

The legacies of the past continue to haunt black people with every step they take into the the future. Thus Armah proposes "the way," the living force, one that would ensure that they avoid past mistakes and work for the common good. According to Anyidoho,

> Armah is not merely recounting history but interpreting it into an ideal which can guarantee survival and purposeful life for his people as a community, not as individuals each seeking to carve a piece of the earth for his personal glory. (127)

There is only "one cause, all else are branches" (26); the cause of Pan-Africanism. There is only one course, "the living way" (26); the way of Anoa. Through "the way" black people become a part of a force so powerful that it transcends, enlightens, and even heals. Two Thousand Seasons, like Thoughts and Ethiopia Unbound, is an expression of active Pan-Africanism.

Popular Literature

While authors like Cugoano, Casely-Hayford and Armah have mainly been preoccupied with the issues of nationalism and Pan-Africanism, other major themes and modes of Ghanaian literature have been expressed in artistic forms such as popular literature, children's literature, literature in local languages, orature, funeral dirges and halo. Popular literature developed in the 1940's and 1950's as an urban phenomenon and has become one of the most widely known literatures in Ghana. There have been a simultaneous growth and spread of this type of literature in major cities in Nigeria, Cameroun, Kenya, etc. Its popularity has increased as the readership multiplies at a fast rate.

However, scholarly interest in popular literature has been slow as literary critics have questioned its artistic worthiness. Two of the exceptions to this trend are Ime Ikiddeh's "The Character of Popular Fiction in Ghana" (1969) and Priebe's "Popular writing in Ghana: A Sociology and Rhetoric" (1979). In Africa, generally, scholarly interest in popular literature began with studies of this phenomenon in Nigeria. Ulli Beier's "Writing in West Africa: A Chance to Adapt and Experiment" and "Public Opinion on Lovers" published in 1962 and 1964, respectively, are some of the earliest writings on this kind of literature in Africa. Nigerian popular literature received comprehensive study in Emmanuel Obiechina's Literature for the Masses --- a Study of Onitsha Market Literature; this title was changed to

An African Popular Literature in the Heinemann edition. The "Onitsha Market" literature has been accepted as a prototype of popular literature. Recently, Ulla Schild and Richard Bjornson, respectively, wrote "Words of Deception: Popular Literature in Kenya" and "Popular Culture in Cameroun."

Almost all of these critics agree that in order to appreciate popular literature fully, it must be placed within the context of popular culture. This literature is linked to the sociological factors that produce it. Thus, its thematic concern, style and language are designed to make it appealing to a great number of readers, most of whom dwell in urban areas. Its trademarks of the use of melodrama, gratuitous plot, contrived ending, cliche and bombastic language have, incidentally, won for popular literature a large readership. It would seem that the artistic standard by which popular literature is evaluated has to be different from that used for the creative writing of writers like Armah, Awoonor and others.

But, this premise might only be partially valid. While there are major differences between popular literature and Armah's writing, for example, there are also significant structural and thematic links between these literatures. Following this contention, I will argue that popular literature is a legitimate literary form and a major artistic mode within the Ghanaian literary system. I will also examine popular literature in relation to the economic and sociological factors that stimulate its growth.

The uncertainty about the literary status of popular literature also characterises its terminology. It has received many designations: trivial literature; chapbooks; literature for the masses; low literature; market literature and Onitsha literature, etc. These titles are based on suppositions of what this genre is or is not and on studies of its general features. The terminologies, "trivial" or "low" and "literature for the masses" are based on the assumption that popular literature is marginal while "serious" or "high" literature is mainstream. But the criteria for any such determination would be dubious since literary taste and worth are for the most part, socially based and fluid, subjective and difficult to measure. Moreover, by its large readership alone popular literature could not be said to be marginal. What constitutes the dynamics of literature and how is the literary centre represented? Is it determined by the "tiny minority"[29] as F.R. Leavis claims? Or is it the vast majority in accordance with democratic principles? "Chapbooks" would not hold well as this term is mostly used perjoratively. The term "Onitsha Market" literature is well known, but it is provincial and localised in Eastern Nigerian.

It seems that the term "popular literature" is broad enough to embrace the concepts associated with this literature and one that is, at the same time, a marked description of the kind of literature in Africa which developed in the 1940's and gained momentum in the 1960's.

Schild writes about the viability of the terminology "popular literature":

> Popular, as I use it, ... has connotations of "liked, admired", (which is a socio-psychological category of taste), "widely spread" (a quantifying judgement) "inexpensive" (an economical aspect), "produced for certain groups of readers" (which allows to discuss the intentions of the writer), and "understandable" (which brings in the intellectual level of the consumer). The term popular is therefore not defined as belonging to a certain social stratum, but is an operational parcel composed of a variety of socio-psychological, economical, ideological and pedagogical aspects.[30]

In Ghana, popular literature is associated with sociological and economic currents and the increase in literacy. The post-World War Two period witnessed an increase in urbanization and a growth in literacy. These factors combined with developments in politics and education to create vital urban centres. In the late 1950's and the early 1960's, the massive efforts of the Nkrumah government at nation building led to the expansion of primary and adult education and the development of a cash economy. Popular literature is a product of the urban environment as various entrepreneurs and writers strive to provide new literates with reading materials and to cash in on the favorable expansion in education and the economy.

Popular literature deals with the subjects of crime, love and money which are the concerns of most urbanites who form the main constituency of this literature. Also, the language is often decorative and the theme is simple in correspondence with the literary skills of both the writers and readership. The readership is mostly middle and high school leavers but includes university students and professionals. The background of the writers vary. Many of them are journalists, administrators, civil servants, lawyers and other professionals, school leavers, writer-publishers and businessmen. The majority of the writers are men.

The entire process of its production and marketing is designed to make this literature desirable to a large audience. The producers of popular literature measure their success by market appeal. They are aware that they are competing in the open market for the reader's "entertainment cedis" and that they share their constituency with the concert parties and cinema houses.

For the producer, one of the important, if not the most important, determinants of the success of popular literature is sales figures. Current sales figures of popular literature in Ghana are unavailable, but counts taken by some scholars over a decade ago reveal that it has been a massive success. Figures compiled by Priebe support this conclusion: Benibengor Blay's Emelia's Promise and Fulfilment, Emelia's Promise After the Wedding totalled over 50,000 sales, while his Love in a Clinic sold over 60,000 copies in four editions, E.K. Mickison's When The Heart Decides sold 40,000 copies with three reprints and Who

Killed Lucy, with two reprints, also sold 40,000 copies. Though the sale figures of the works of major Ghanaian writers like Armah, Awoonor and Sutherland are not available, it is almost certain that the sales of their works do not approach the figures for popular literature.

What accounts for the massive success of popular literature? The factors range from the methods of marketing to content to the cognitive issues of these works which suit the temperaments and interests of their readers. In an interview by Stephen Grant, Asare Konadu, one of the most successful producers of popular literature in Ghana, speaks of his versatility in bringing a book to his readers. Konadu's strategy includes door to door sales and distribution through schools, post-office work places, department stores and street vendors. Priebe testifies about the marketing skills of Konadu:

> In many cases, the postmasters can always be located or the headmaster of a school, or perhaps the librarian in a secondary school who will always be there. Where we find out it going to be (someone from) a government department, perhaps the accounts clerk who pays people at the end of the month.(We can easily collect whatever is owed). So, when you are sending books, and the chap refuses to pay they have access to deduct the money.[31]

The whole publishing venture is cost-saving in order that the product would be affordable by the readers whose incomes are low. Writers like Konadu and Blay, respectively, of Anowuo and Benibengor Blay Agency, have managed their own production units using the help a of few part-time workers. They mostly publish their own works.

The linguistic medium of popular literature is usually English, sometimes pidgin English. It is mostly fiction, although some entrepreneurs produce "how to" books and books on ethics (for example, Hannah Hagan's Courtesy for Boys and Girls). The length is usually under 100 pages, mostly between 40 and 60 pages long. Konadu's Come Back Dora (212 pages) is an exception.

A convention of popular literature is to have a declamation that the book is a fictional work and a statement that the characters are fictitious. Then, the author undertakes a plot summary. Konadu introduces Come Back Dora in the following manner:

> Throughout the story and mingled with his intimate confessions, the fight between emotions, pity, duty and the shattering impact of the traditional custodians of their culture who would stop at nothing to see that Boateng is taken through the rituals, forms the background of this heart-throbbing novel. Beginning with the death of his wife in a colonial hospital in Cape Coast, the story traces in detail the ritual connected with Boateng's life as a widower and his part in moulding a society dominated by soul worshipping, sacrifices, invocation of ancestral spirits and other breath-taking rituals.
>
> In the shadowy malignant depths of beliefs and disbeliefs, the story is frighteningly realistic and gives for the first time a great insight into a society in which nothing happens except ordained by the souls of ancestors, or by oracles or gods and goddesses.[32]

Popular literature is defined by its subject: the sensations of city life. The plot often involves mobility up the social ladder or change in economic situation. For instance, in Konadu's Shadow of Wealth, Alice, a village beauty arriving in Accra is fascinated by the city and is determined to become rich. She becomes the mistress of Dr. Frimpong, a medical practitioner, and almost breaks up his marriage. In the end Alice relents and disengages herself from this relationship, but not before she ruins Dr. Frimpong financially.

The writers maintain predictable narrative patterns and they frequently adjudicate, provide answers and clarify any dilemmas. Normally, the "good guys" emerge victorious and the "bad guys" are exposed. These dispositions suit the temperament of the readers who, as Priebe explains,

> have little time for complexity in their literature; in fact, when they look to literature they try to find resolution for the complexities of life. Thus the world of the popular novellete is often an unambiguous world where good is rewarded and evil punished. In the Ghanaian novelette we tend to find a world where individuals are punished for giving vent to their lust and desire. A recurrent phrase in several works and the title of one book is "paid in his own coin". (414)

Other regular subjects of popular literature are love, witch-craft, polygamy and crime. For example, Dr. Issac Ephson's The Kidnapping of a Millionaire's Daughter and Cofie Quaye's Murder in Kumasi and Sammy Slams The Gang deal with crime. Konadu's subject in Come Back, Dora is superstition, a topic that is also explored in Dr. Ephson's book. Then a few of the works such as Zaya Yeebo's The Butchers of Ogyakrom are about political issues. There are also biographies like Blay's Legend of Kwame Nkrumah and L.H. Ofosu-Appiah's The Life of Lt. General E.K. Kotoka, the Hero of Ghana's 24th February Revolution.

In popular literature fidelity is encouraged and the unfaithful partner is usually punished. Love is expresssed in extravagant and high-blown sentiments. It is not unusual to include designer love-letters in these works. Much of the trappings of urban life style are captured in popular literature. Readers are exposed to the life styles of the rich and famous, the trade marks of the tabloid, such as in Mickison's Lucy series and Dr. Ephson's The Kidnapping of the Millionaire's Daughter.

Some of the writers engage in merely repeating common experiences and situations. They write according to formats offering their readers formulaic entertainment. For instance, in Mickison's Woman is Poison, the plot is predictable and can be deduced from the title. The entire book is a replication of this message borne in the title; every step of the plot confirms it.

Popular literature is full of male chauvinism. Perhaps this is so because the majority of the writers are men. In this literature it is usually the woman who violates societal norms, causes friction, cheats and disrupts relationships --- "woman is poison". In Who Killed Lucy, Mickison portrays men as victims of Lucy's extravagance, greed and indiscretion. In his prefactory remarks, he intimates that his story is meant to

> serve as a reprimand and perhaps a 'purgative' to those ladies who, flattered by their beauty, popularity or position in life, make not only folly but also donkeys of themselves by remaining rolling stones in the hands of men --- changing man to man.[33]

Even when the subject is about polygamy (The Kidnapping of a Millionaire's Daughter) the woman always comes out badly.

Though it may not be aesthetically enduring, popular literature is successful as a commercial product. Why? A probable reason is that the "artistic flaws" of this literature are the conversational style and speech patterns of the majority of its readership. Popular literature also has wide appeal to readers for sociological reasons. It deals with subjects (crime, love, infidelity, adventure, etc.) that are familiar to most of its readers, mainly urban dwellers, who also patronise James Bond films and other thrillers.

But a defective literary work is exactly that. With the re-publication of some of the texts of popular literature by mainstream publishers (for example Konadu's Come Back Dora, published by HEB as Ordained By The Oracles), it is anticipated that there will be further clarification about the criteria used to evaluate this type of literature.

Already some critics have attempted to establish the significance of popular literature in relation to other genres and modes of literature in Africa. Richard Priebe and Harold Scheub deserve special mention for their comparative studies of popular literature, "high" or "elite" literature, and oral tradition. According to Priebe, there are indications that Ghanaian popular literature and "high" literature have several common elements. For one thing, the two kinds of literature come "out of the same social setting" (410). There are general thematic links but some differences between them as well.

> In both the popular and elite literature a primary motivation for the action of characters is that something is rotten in the state. The elite literature transcends the reality through symbolic inversion; the popular literature avoids reality through sublimation. (414-415)

Priebe concludes that the two "literatures are complementary, affording in different terms mirrors of the same social condition" (415). He compares popular writing to the works of Armah and Awoonor:

> In the works of Armah and Awoonor we see a disordered world, peopled with corrupt individuals and challenged by the positive vision of a good man. It is no accident that Armah's hero is simply called "the man" -- he is the one person who sees the possibility in the midst of corruption, the possibility of people acting in a humane manner. In popular literature we are shown the obverse. Into a healthy, well-ordered world steps the individual who threatens the order with his or her (usually her) immoral actions. Despite the actions of the fallen individual, which

> are always described in rather puritanical language, this is a world of almost perfect cleanliness .... Yet in terms of the rhetorical motivation in the popular works, we see an escape from an unhealthy world. (415)

Scheub for his part relates popular literature to African oral literature. His argument is that "some works of popular literature can be seen as a set of instructions for coping with the realities of a literal world, but couched in the manner and style of the oral tradition".[34] He argues that the decorative language and the colorful emotional display in popular literature are signs of the heavy leaning of that literature on the oral tradition. In popular literature, the

> elements of the oral tradition [is] transported to the written form ... The vitality, the vivid imagery, stark dialogue, and outrageous didactism reconstitute the oral performance in a bizzare way in much popular literature. Of course, the oral performance is not itself being transposed: the body of the performer is not there; the voice, music, dance, the relations between audience and artist are lacking. But the writers of such literature brazenly work their ways to the emotional core of oral performance; they understand the way images are patterned, they grasp the significance of the motif and its organizing capacities. (35)

Scheub concludes that in popular literature, "the oral tale is placed into an urban framework" (36). And if the plots are predictable and stereotypical, and the actions obvious it is because popular fiction relies on the poetics of oral literature. In the oral tradition, the audience is usually familiar with the plot. The story teller embellishes this familiar plot, adds suspense and enriches the narrative with ingredients from his tradition.

Priebe and Scheub offer fresh insight into the popular genre by identifying and illustrating its connection with other literary forms. It is apparent that popular literature can be appreciated in its own right as well as context with other literatures.

Literature for Children

The study of children's literature must involve not only textual analysis, but also an examination of the process of child education. A rewarding approach must consider the forms and contexts of literary works in relation to child development. This perspective leads to the evaluation of texts and the investigation of the educational system and other general factors which help the child's intellectual and cultural development. Teachers, parents, librarians, illustrators, psychologists, and the social environment are part of this process. How do children acquire knowledge? What do they learn? And what pleasures do they derive in doing so? These are some of the major questions asked in regards to children's literature.

In Ghana, until the 1970's, children's literature received low priority and the main reasons for this are not difficult to find. First, because the early educators (the missionaries and colonial administrators) and also post-independence governments had urgent need to train people for their own programs, there was emphasis on adult education at the expense of child education. The content of adult education was the "Three Rs," which were stressed as basic skills needed for individuals to fulfil missionary and administrative activities. Added to this factor was the lack of avenues for local publishing, a problem which Ghanaians only began to tackle in the 1960's with the establishment of the Ghana Publishing Corporation (GPC). There were few if any questions about the suitability of reading materials which before the inception of the GPC were imported from Europe, mostly Britain.

In the late 1960's when educators started to give some attention to children's education, they discovered that the problem was profound in this area especially. Ghanaian educators were slow to recognise the importance of child education. When they finally began to consider its significance, they realised how limited their resources were. They were ill-prepared when in the 1960's the schools were flooded with youngsters eager to learn. To remedy this problem the bureaucrats at the Ministry of Education responded by importating books from England for use by primary and secondary schools. Children's classics such as Lewis Carroll's (Charles Lutwidge Dodgson) Alice in Wonderland, Thomas Hughes's Tom Brown's School Days, Robert Louis Stevenson's Treasure Island and fairy tales like

Cinderella and Jack and the Beanstalk were widely read by Ghanaian children.

There are advantages to reading foreign literature, especially if they are excellent works. But these books ought to be used to complement local materials. Unfortunately, the western texts became standard readers in Ghanaian schools. The imported books tend to evoke a world totally different from the social and natural environment of the Ghanaian child. They contain images of winter, snow, spring, summer, autumn and daffodils and have nothing to say about harmattan, cocoa, forts and castles along the coasts of Ghana where slaves were once kept. As a result the learning process has become alienating and there is unnecessary pressure on school children to envision a totally unfamiliar world.

Because they are in their formative years, it is crucial that children be able to learn about themselves and their traditions. Even an excellent children's reader has limited impact if it says nothing about their social and natural environments. In children's literature, aesthetic demands ought to be integrated with the overall need for child development.

The fundamental issue which should prevail in determining children's literature is the overall educational value of the text for children. Parents and educators care (or ought to care) greatly about children's literature since it plays a significant part in the children's intellectual, perceptual and moral development. It is expected that children's literature will reflect the ideals of their society. With careful selection of reading materials, children can be brought quite early to understand the common ethics of their society and with effective guidance they can be taught to appreciate the attitudes and actions associated with good citizenship.

In addition there are pragmatic factors to be considered. If children are to appreciate the treasures of literature, the books must be interesting, well-written, appealing and most of all, relevant. Primarily, children's books should be for them. It is effective when the literature involves play or repeated activity. Regarding content, children's literature ought to depict reality, symbols and characters with which children can identify. The plots should be simple and predictable and the stories should be readable at one sitting. Children's books must contain illustrations, pictures and colors to break the monotony of reading. The books must not be too heavy nor should the pages be too many nor the print too small for the comfort of the child. Hopefully, these aesthetic and practical considerations will make reading a pleasurable and stimulating activity.

While the lack of appropriate local reading materials is a definite deficiency of child education, the problem is somewhat reduced because of the rich cultural environment experienced by Ghanaian children. They share in the oral tradition of story telling, riddles, folktales, festivals drama, drumming and dancing. Folktales, especially those dealing with animal subjects, are popular with children. They enjoy listening to stories about humanised animals, for such as the tortoise and Ananse the spider and about how animals live and their relation with human beings. Young children are captivated by the mimicking of the sounds of animals or conversely, of animals attempting to speak like human beings. Animal stories are ideal for children since most of them love animals. Much can be accomplished through these folktales as children learn about dramatic features such as conflicts, characterisation, personification and narration.

Young people benefit greatly from their interaction with both adults and their playmates. The outdoor life promotes regular social intercourse. As well the content and forms of children's games in Ghana have been successfully incorporated into some written children's literature and have become the subject of scholarly study. Abu Abarry and Emmanuel Y. Egblewogbe, both Ghanaian critics, have written about the impact of games and songs on child development. According to them play songs and other such activities serve a variety of functions: recreation, development of friendship and educating young people about the values of their society. Abarry observes that many of the play songs of Ga children serve these multiple functions. Among the examples he lists are "Nyongtsere" ("The Moon") and "Fomo Gbi Joo" ("The Birthday Dance).

The first example is a children's rhythmic song about the moon:

Ga
Nyongtsere ni eje
Wobaa Shwe
Wobaa jo

Nyongtsere ni eje
Wobaa Shwe
Wobaa jo.[35]

The Moon is out
We Shall play
We shall dance

The moon is out
We shall play
We shall dance. (207)

"Fomo Gbi Joo" also involves rhythmic repetitions and dance:

Ga
Moni afo le ju le
Teshi

Teshi
Teshi koni ojo
Moni afo le ju le
Teshi
Teshi
Teshi koni ojo

Talala lala laala
Talala lala laala
Talaa laa la (209).

Were you born on a Monday
Stand up
Stand up
Stand up
Stand up and dance

Were you born on a Monday
Stand up
Stand up
Stand up and dance

Talala lala laala
Talala lala laala
Talaa laa la. (209)

Ghanaians are named after the days on which they are born and this song calls on children born on a certain day to get up and dance once the refrain falls on the day they are born. In the example above all children born on Monday are being asked to participate in the dance. This play song is repetitious and the only section that changes is the names of the days.

Abarry notes that there are different play songs for diverse activities and occasions. There are songs for: "Kwani Kwani" (Hide and Seek) and "Namo Ayele Awi" (Who Gets Hurt?). Children inherit this tradition from their elders and they pass it on to their younger brothers and sisters. Abarry concludes that Ga children's songs help them to "imbibe moral, social, cultural and aesthetic values imperative to their effective socialisation" (213). Children from other language groups in Ghana have their own play songs and derive as much benefit from them.

Play songs are informal and organised around loose children's groups. They are popular and children need no prompting to get involved. As a matter of fact they consider it a treat to participate in these activities. The songs are not written down, but the texts are known by all or most of the children. When it comes to dancing there are no formal instructions; the children engage in rhythmic movements and co-ordinated clapping and they go through the dance routines and repertoire with ease.

The popularity of children's play songs and their repertoire constitute a vibrant raw material for the writer of children's literature. The successful Ghanaian writers are those who have been able to capture many of these elements and other features that children find appealing. The play element, the relaxation, song and refrains stimulate the interest of children in written texts.

Some of the successful purveyors of children's literature have structured their written works to embrace some of the features of the oral tradition. This trend is led by Efua Sutherland, who, since the 1960's, has worked relentlessly for the development of children's literature in Ghana. Sutherland's Playtime in Africa is a dramatization of a number of children's plays. She renders a number of popular Ghanaian children's games into forms that promote activity. For example, Sutherland's "Ampe," is a well-orchestrated game of clapping and jumping for girls in charades amenable to those activities.

> Clap as you jump, fling out foot,
> sometimes the left foot, sometimes the right.
> You will score when your foot meets mine.
> I will score when our two feet cross.
>
> No boys can join our jumping game.
> It's Ampe, and it's just for girls.[36]

Some of the games involve the production of things, such as weaving mats:

> Helping fathers make mats is a special kind
> of game.
> The rushes we weave grow near streams
> in the forests where we play. (50)

Another example involves clay work:

> There's clay near the streams, too, soft,
> slippery clay ---
> so good to knead and mold.
> We make it into animals and pots and boats
> and bricks. (51)

Sutherland attempts to involve children in reading which is combined with the making of things; the two activities help the intellectual development of the child. Drama promotes play activities and engages the children in making concrete things.

Playtime in Africa is a useful book to teach children about their environment. Sutherland writes about Harmattan:

> It's Harmattan season.
> Leaves, grass, and cornhusks are all brittle
> dry.
> The Harmattan wind makes them drier every
> day.
>
> They are piled up in heaps.
>
> We can hide them.
> We can toss them just as the wind does.
>
> Can't you hear them crackle? (45)

There are also rhythmic poems about scarecrows and the xylophone in Playtime in Africa.

Sutherland's book has excellent photographs of children who are engaged in a wide variety of activities. These pictures portray local backgrounds and images of children about the ages of the book's potential readers. Each write-up is set on the same page as the picture which describes that particular activity. The print is bold and the descriptions are precise. The games are about actual events and are designed to stimulate response from young readers. Playtime in Africa can be used to help develop children's reading skills as well as to promote their games.

In another book, Vulture! Vulture! and Tahinta Sutherland concentrates on rhythms and repetition to depict the sing-song effect of children's play. The stories of the plays are simple. "Vulture! Vulture!" is about Mr. Vulture who refuses the tasty and spicy food prepared by his wife because of preference for a dead rat. The entire play is an extended call and response between Mr. Vulture, a messenger and a chorus:

> Vulture: What is ready?
>
> Chorus: Seenyiwa Adedende
> Seenyiwa.
>
> Messenger: Roasted chicken.
>
> Chorus: Seenyiwa Adedende
> Seenyiwa.
>
> Vulture: I am not hungry.[37]

The second play Tahinta is about the fishing expedition of a young boy at the Birim river. In this drama, the boy describes his experience to a chorus which responds with the chant "Tahinta":

Boy: I cast my net.
Chorus: Tahinta
Boy: Cast it is a circle,
Chorus: Tahinta
Boy: In the ripping water,
Chorus: Tahinta
Boy: I drew, I drew,
Chorus: Tahinta
Boy: I drew my net. (20).

Sutherland has successfully maintained a balance between aesthetic and didactic needs. The integration of these two principles are necessary in children's education. In her dramatic works, Foriwa and The Marriage of Anansewa, Sutherland again makes manifest her commitment to use drama for education. In Foriwa, she deals with the familiar traditional story of the proud maiden who rejects the proposals from all the prospective young men from her village but instead accepts a proposal from a stranger who later transforms into a skull and tries to kill his bride. Sutherland reworks this folktale and makes the protagonist, Foriwa, a symbol of change and progress in her society, rather than a haughty female who feels superior to her fellow villagers as in the original tale. Foriwa rejects the suitors from her community because, firstly, she is not satisfied with them and, secondly, she feels none of them would be willing to join her in her commitment to reform her society. Instead, Foriwa accepts the offer of marriage by Labaran, a young man from the Northern part of Ghana. However, unlike the original traditional tale, the marriage between Foriwa and Labaran is very successful. The alliance between these two young people represents the broad unity of the country. Through the union of Foriwa and Labaran, Sutherland seems to say, the different ethnic groups can be brought together to develop their country.

Sutherland's The Marriage of Anansewa is rendered in the story-telling mode. The story of Anansewa's marriage is told by a narrator to an audience. During this session, the main dramatic personae, the internal actors, play out their roles. Often, there is exchange between these "internal" characters and the the story-teller and his listeners.

Anansewa shows the society's attitude to marriage. The focus is on the trickster figure, Ananse, who, true to form, dupes a number of prominent men whom he misleads into thinking they are each the prospective husband for his daughter. Sutherland exposes the multiple dealings of Ananse and also makes the reader aware of the predicament of young women like Anansewa whose family's poor and material circumstances force them into unsuitable marriages.

Foriwa and Anansewa appeal to all readers. Sutherland harnesses the rich elements of her indigenous tradition for her dramatic works. She uses the modes of drama and story-telling to teach children about Ghanaian culture, to motivate her fellow citizens and to work for change in society. Sutherland successfully extends story-telling sessions across all communities in Ghana and registers her commitment to nation-building.

To return to my introductory comments, I wish to emphasise that generally, literature is a powerful tool for educating children. Children appreciate the treasures of literature; they derive much pleasure and learn about the values of their society from literature. As a result of the efforts of Sutherland and others there is now available a substantial body of appropriate texts which appeal directly to the perception and understanding of Ghanaian children.

Toko Atolia (The Fifth Landing-Stage) by F. Kwasi Fiawoo

The variety of dramatic works produced by Ghanaian creative artists include the concert party (a form popular theatre), children's theatre, drama in local languages (Fiawoo and Danquah) and what can be described as "literary" drama (Aidoo). In this section I will examine F.K. Fiawoo's Toko Atolia, an early dramatic work (1937) in Ewe that is significant because of its artistic excellence. The International Phonetic Institute, London, awarded it with a first prize for works written in local languages in 1937. Toko Atolia has won wide popularity among Ewe readership and it is a primary text for schools across the Volta region of Ghana and Togo. This Ewe classic has been translated into English and German.

However, despite its wide appeal among Ewe readers and its artistic and cultural significance, Toko Atolia has received only minor critical attention, mostly in survey-type studies: Vladimir Klima, et al., Black Africa, Albert Gérard's African Language Literatures and Simon Agbeko Amegbleame's "La fiction narrative dans la production littéraire Ewé" (1980). An exception to this is Awoonor's The Breast of The Earth where Fiawoo's play is given considerable examination.

Toko Atolia is a classic example of an excellent artistic work which has suffered critical neglect partly because it is an early work (in terms of Ghanaian literary history) and mostly because it was first written in a local language in which many critics of Ghanaian literature lack expertise. Even though there was an early English translation of this play by Fiawoo, it never became the subject of a major critical study. It would seem that a great number of critics of African literature pay little or no attention to works in local languages since they do not readily see the artistic worthiness of these works. Fiawoo's play suffers from the intellectual amnesia which is the fate of most of the works in African languages. In relation to the national literature of Ghana, that such a major work should remain in obscurity says much about the orientation of most of the scholars of that literature. This anomaly serves to validate the argument that critics make incomplete statements about Ghanaian literature when they do not include works in indigenous languages. It is an indictment of those scholars who focus exclusively on works in English in their study of Ghanaian national literature.

Fiawoo relates his play to Classical and Elizabethan dramas and the Ewe tradition. In his prefectory remarks, he notes his reliance as well as departure from the classical and Elizabethan principles of drama:

> Ewe
>
> Drama sia mewo de drama-nlolawo abe Aristotle kple eyomedzelawo fe gbe dzi bibo o. Eyata amea deke megabu bena siawo kata dzo le gafofo blave vo ene me o, eye womegabu ha bena nya siawo kata dzo le tefe deka ko o. Ke le nutinya fe dekanono me ya la, edo fome kple blemato faa, elabena eya le vevie. Kpuie ko la, nunlonlo sia wo de drama fe sewo kple dodowo dzi abe alesi Ablotsi drama-nlolawo le titina noliwo kple fifi nloliwo me, alo mia nlotitowo, do kpe edzi ene.[38]
>
> This drama does not conform closely to the rules of the three unities viewed by Aristotle and his followers as the fundamental principles of dramatic craftmanship. Necessarily, the unities of time and place, which are not suitable for our purpose, have been disregarded. That being so, no one should expect that the action represented here would be such as could take place within twenty-four hours, nor need any hope to find the scene of action

> limited to one locality. But this work associates itself rigidly with the unity of action which demands that everything not compatible with the development of the plot should be excluded from the play, for this is most important in every dramatic structure. In short it follows the conventional tenets of the dramatists under the influence of the Renaissance, as also those of our modern writers. (8)

However, Fiawoo insists that his play is an original Ewe dramatic work:

> Ewe
>
> evo nutinya biblio kata ya la nye Anyoawo nutinya le Anlonyigba dzi hena Ewexlelawo kata. (viii)
>
> It is, however, an Anlo drama pure and simple, taking place on Anlo soil, and originally written in our Ewe language. (8)

This position is again affirmed in the following:

> Ewe
>
> Agbala sia do abe dola ene tso mia togbuiwo gbo. Etso wofe agbenononutinya kpui de ve na mi egbeviwo le Evenyigba dzi kple dzronyigba siwo di bena yewoanya nane le miafe blematowo nutila. (vii)
>
> This little book comes as a messenger from our forefathers. It gives a brief sketch of life in their day for the benefit of the present generation of Ewe land, and all who desire to know something about the customs of our ancient people. (7)

Fiawoo presents himself as the voice of the ancestors "mia togbuiwo fe gbe" (ix) from whom he receives his inspiration.

Although he incorporates the elements of western drama, Fiawoo is also committed to producing an Ewe drama, one that represents its aesthetics, culture and experience. The Ewe oral tradition remains the staple upon which the edifice of his play is based. He captures the speech nuances of his people and calls for the sympathetic attention of his audience.

Toko Atolia is divided into five acts, each with sub-acts, which conform to plot development as in the Shakespearean drama. After a general introduction of the major characters and subjects in the first act, the action continues in Act Two to show the conflicting interests among the characters and the society as a whole. The climax is achieved in Act Three when two young women are condemned to exile. Act Four marks the beginning of the denouement, starting with the exposure of the arch-villain and the rescue of the innocent. In Act Five, there is final resolution, whereby the arch-villain is punished but saved from death.

Fiawoo's play is set in the Anlo area, Southern Volta region, in the second half of the nineteenth century. He refers to the historical migration of Ewes from Notsi in Benin Republic to their present homeland and he deals with the subject of slavery which existed even at that time.

Fiawoo dramatises the experience of a group of young people who try to determine their partners for marriage against parental opposition. The antagonist, Agbegbada, an expert dissembler, is the suitor preferred by the parents of the bride-to-be, Fudzikomele. However this young woman can see through Agbebada, and she selects his rival, Kumasi, an amiable and brave young man, as her future partner. Fudzikomele resists pressure from her parents to marry Agbebada and receives the support of her younger sister, Dzikunya. The two women are disowned by their parents and driven from their home. They embark on a treacherous trip to the Krobo area but are caught and sold to slave-traders.

The rival suitors, Agbegbada and Kumasi set out to rescue the young women but the former returns home with a false story about the death of Fudzikomele and Dzikunya. Agbegbada then asks for the hand of Fudzikomele's second sister, Sefenya, in marriage. However, before he can make any progress, he is charged and found guilty (through a trial by ordeal) of seducing another man's wife.

Meanwhile, Kumasi continues alone with his search and succeeds in rescuing Fudzikomele and Dzikunya from a white slave trader. They return home and are welcomed as heroes. Agbegbada is now totally disgraced and the society will no longer tolerate his crimes. He is sentenced to die by being buried alive at the fifth landing stage. The executioners carry out the sentence, but then Agbebada is rescued by Kumasi. Before he flees into exile, Agbegbada changes his name to Amegbedzi, "meaning done with evil", and pledges to live by the ideals of his new name.

In portraying the characters of his play, Fiawoo emphasises their behavorial traits. The actions of the characters are encapsulated by their names. For example, Agbebada means "evil life" and Kumasi means "the man who defies death". As it turns out, Agbebada lives by his name; he is incapable of virtuous behaviour. Kumasi, who in defiance of death and personal safety, rescues the young Fudzikomele and Dzikunya from slavery, also acts according to his name.

During his search for Fudzikomele (meaning child of woe) and Dzikunya (meaning daughter of sorrow), Kumasi, in a soliloquy, asks:

Ewe

> O Fudzikomele! Nukata dawo tso nko sia na wo do? Eye nko la di nuwo vevie alea? Eye wo Dzikunya, vava nya la do dziku me na wo, be nebu dokuiwo hefu noviwo dzi, hema efe tohee madzemadze la kpakplii. Eyata nye Kumasi, nye ha nko sia nedi nunye ale be dzika nagatso fonye o, be maxo na mi kokoko. (36)
>
> Oh, Fudzikomele, child of woe! Why did your mother name you thus? Are you to justify your name in endless trouble? And you, Dzikunya, daughter of sorrow. Is your name also prophetic, that you should share the destiny of sister? Then let this be true of me that according to my name I should never fear death. Thus may I save you at all costs, even if I have to pluck you from the jaws of death. (49)

Fiawoo establishes a pattern of constrasts between good and bad characters, a technique common to morality plays. It must be noted that because of missionary efforts, Christian literature such as John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress was widely known and did influence early Ghanaian writing. However, while Christian literature might have provided inspiration for Fiawoo, his dramatic work also benefits from his mastery of elements of secular literature and, of course, his indigenous tradition.

Fiawoo's characters are not delineated simply as types as, for example, those of Sam Obianim's Amegbeto. They are portrayed as active, strong and sometimes stubborn characters who project their viewpoints and are willing to go to great lengths in defense of their ideas. For instance, Fudzikomele, defies her parents and rejects Agbegbada. Similarly, Kumasi perseveres in his search for Fudzikomele. Agbegbada is portrayed as an Iago-like character who knits together a web of intrigue which generates the dramatic interest and gives momentum to the entire play. He manipulates others, keeps them confused and is very egocentric. The other characters are forced to react to his actions.

The characters of Toko Atolia are self-motivated as they strive to determine their own futures within a traditional society heavily under the auspices of their rigid and inflexible elders. But there is no simple polarisation of society between young people and their elders. The young people, with the exception of Agbegbada, do not violate the norms of tradition. Instead, many of them, like some of their elders, attempt to assert its enduring values.

Fudzikomele, for example, challenges the practice of arranged marriage and demonstrates why young people must be listened to when it comes to deciding whom they should marry. Kumasi is tested according to the ideals of heroism among the Anlos, and is rewarded with the hand of the woman he loves. In the end, it is group interest that is paramount. Kumasi and Fudzikomele restore the true values of the traditions which are threatened by Agbegbada.

In line with his commitment to present the experience of the Anlo people, Fiawoo uses conversational style and dialogue. In his preface he appeals to his readers to take note of his language:

> Ewe
>
> Dola si xo ale nya sia ve la le tafltse dom na agbale sia xlelawo be woale to de yefe nuti nyuie, elabena yele yefe dodasi la dege afia le yewo fe blema gbe me. Nusi to wowo susu sia do la enye be, edi be yeawo Anlomegawo fe gbe dzi tututu, elabena blematowo melona be woatro yewo fe nyawo agblo bubui o. (ix-x)
>
> The messenger begs all his readers to pay particular attention to his manner of speech, as he is under the strict obligation to deliver his message in the language of the ancients. For these old folks would never permit him to express it otherwise. If he dares, he will be condemned as a liar. (9)

Fiawoo dispenses with the practice of using biblical language (as in Sam Obianim's Amegbeto). This development is best summed up by Awoonor:

> Fiawoo, unlike others who wrote in Ewe at the same time, does not use the biblical style which tended to be stiff and non-colloquial.

> He tried as much as possible to capture the cadences of spoken Ewe and stuck very faithfully to the speech patterns of an older language. This faithful adherence to spoken Ewe language was dictated apparently by a certain distaste for biblical style which uses more a "grammatical," "book"-type language than existed in current speech.[39]

Fiawoo's use of the proverb is most impressive. What Achebe says about the significance of the proverb among Igbos' society can be applied to the Ewes. According to Achebe the art of conversation is highly appreciated among the Igbos and proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten.[40] Like the Igbos, Ewes have great pride in their language. How a message is rendered is as crucial as the message itself. In Toko Atolia, Fiawoo uses proverbs as expressions of Ewe speech patterns; they constitute the speech cadences of the daily use of the language.

Besides being a means of enriching speech, proverbs serve a vital artistic function in helping to define characters, themes, and other issues in the play. Sometimes they become the mechanism employed by characters to extricate themselves from difficulties. For example, after Fudzikomele and Dzikunya are kidnapped by robbers in the Krobo district, they engage in proverbial talk which reflects their self pity, but which also serves as a means of undermining the confidence of their captors. They engage in what might be defined as "sass",[41] a verbal weapon of self-defense designed to frustrate their captors.

After he gives up the search for the two sisters, Agbegbada returns home to propose to Sefenya who is uncooperative. The young girl then challenges the order of her parents that she should marry Agbegbada. In the ensuing exchange regarding this proposition, which Agbegbada interestingly describes as "lo ... dodo" (56) or "a battle of words" (65), Sefenya and her mother, Senofe, use proverbs to argue their position. Senofe warns her daughter:

Ewe

> Menye towo kata mee wolena do o; ele be dewo nasuso hena nono. (55)
>
> Do they not say that one should not bathe in every stream but should leave some clean for drinking purposes. (64)

Sefenya replies:

Ewe

> Ele be miale de to bubluwo me eye esiwo me ko la, miasa wo di hena nono. Gake wo la elena de zozroeawo me eye negblea blibawo di hena nono. (55)
>
> We should bathe in streams already cloudy, but there are clear streams from which we should drink. You, however, bathe in the clear water and leave the muddy water for drinking. (64)

Frustrated, the mother asks her daughter:

Ewe

> Amekae fia nyawowo wo alea? (56)
>
> Who has taught you to talk like this? (64)

And she responds:

> Ewe
>
> Ke nenye nyatefe tom mele la, ekem fome biblo la kata toe. (56)
>
> If I have spoken the truth this goes to the credit of the family. (65)

Sefenya uses proverbs as a verbal rebuttal in order to express her opposition to her parents who are pressuring to marry Agbegbada.

There are many maxims in Toko Atolia to promote good behavior and positive societal values. In the very first scene of this play, the elders warn against lying:

> Ewe
>
> Womeatoa dzo alakpato fe xo o; de wokone. Nyatefee, devia le mo gbegble dzi. Egbona fofoa dzra ge kpuie. (3)
>
> Remember the saying, "Don't burn the house of the liar, remove the roof", meaning "Do not silence a liar until he has finished his statement" .... He will be bringing his father to ruin soon. (21)

When Agbegbada tries to impress Fudzikomele with his good looks and wealth she reminds him that

> Ewe
>
> Hotsui nye nudowonu nyuia de, gake gbegble me ko wokploa ame yine. Deka dzedze si nu nunya mele o la, so kple atsiagbo si dzena nyuie le kpokpo nu gake menya nyina o, elabena ettrea nu me enyilawo. Henema ke kalewowo nunya manomee la, so kple atsiafu si dzea agbo atoxe. Egblea nu gede: enyroa vuwo, eye wo me nuwo tsrona. (6)

> Money may be a fine thing but it often leads to destruction. Good looks without wisdom are like fruit which looks edible but is rather bitter and harmful. Bravery without good sense has only the strength of waves beating upon the shore. The sea does much damage. It wrecks ships and devours their cargoes. (24)

Baffled, not without a touch of irony, Agbegbada declares:

> Ewe
>
> miafe detuguiawo fe ade le dadam ndi sia ta. (7)
>
> our girls to-day have sharp tongues but no wits. (25)

The experiences of the society with the justice system is also described using proverbs. After the Anlo chief, Zanyido, learns that Amaglo has condemned his daughters, Fudzikomele and Dzikunya, unjustly to exile, he lets his councillors know of his displeasure with such a judgement:

> Ewe
>
> Ne dzidulawo wo se madzemadze la, dumeviwo kpea fu de eta. Ne atikewolawo wo dadafu le wofe doyoyo me la, wodia wofe vodadawo de yodo me. Ke neneme ke ne vunudrolawo tso afia nkuno la, ezua tetekpo na nyahelawo. (25)
>
> Grain gets bad justice in fowls' court, and lambs in the court of hyenas. Bad justice makes people suffer. (40)

While Fiawoo celebrates the vitality of Ewe traditional life, he leaves no doubt about his disapproval of a few customs. He condemns the practice whereby parents coerce their children to marry against their will. This, as Fiawoo shows, is clearly an abuse of the law. The Anlo chief explains that

> Ewe
>
> Amea dewo buna bena se la de mo na yewo beyewoawo nusi ke yewolo kple yewofe viwo. Enye fome la fe do be woakpe de nyonuvi la nu le efe nutsu tiatia me, ke menye kple dzizizi o. Fome la axlo nu devi la, eye ne eya ha nye vi senugome la, eya kple edzilawo fe gbe awo deka godoo. Ke ne deviwo kpo nuwonaa de le nutsuvi la me, esi menyo ne o la, ade nya siawo afia edzilawo, eye woadzo eme akpo. (25)
> Many people seem to think (even to this day) that according to the law they can do what they like with their children. It is the duty of parents to advise their daughters in the choice of a husband, but they should not coerce her. An Instructed child will usually follow the counsel of her parents. But if she finds something in the young man which does not please her she should be free to speak of it to her parents and they should investigate the matter. (40)

Parents, like their children, are subject to the customary regulations. They must interpret the law according to values of the traditional society.

The survival of a society depends upon how well it maintains its laws, that is why those whose actions threaten the interest of the entire group must be dealt with appropriately. Gbadago worries about the behavior of his son, Agbegbada and he repeatedly, intervenes to appease his neighbours whom have been hurt by Agbegbada. During a trial he appeals to Amedza, whose wife Agbegbada was accused of seducing, to forgive his son:

> Ewe
>
> Dzre la, gbemenue. Evana le miafe nudediwo me, eye ne miedo nukpee, nyea do go afea me o

> la, exoa zi, dea ha kple ame, gblea, xolo kple xolo dome, alo novi kple novi dome boboe. Eyata mina miatsi nya la kata nu le afisia. (64-65)
>
> A quarrel is like an unwelcome stranger who visits us unexpectedly and makes his home with us, bringing strife between relations, friends and brothers. Let us get rid of the vile fellow and bring this unhappy affair to an end. (70)

But Amedza wants justice to run its full course:

> Ewe
>
> Womedoa to tso gakoa ko de dzi o. (65)
>
> Once plunged into a stream and you cannot come out dry. (71)

Agbagbada is then subjected to a trial by ordeal and is found guilty of coveting Amedza's wife.

In the final act of Toko Atolia, when he becomes aware that he has been sentenced to die at Toko Atolia, Agbegbada pleads with his executioners to spare him. But they tell him that it is too late and that the elders have ruled that he is beyond reform:

> Ewe
>
> Ne miafe avowo fo di la miedea wo tsi nyana, eye wogadina. Ke ameka ate nu atso nko fodi ade tsi anya maha? (81)
>
> When our clothes are dirty we can wash them. But what can wash away stains from out names? (81-82)

There is social equilibrium when the laws are observed. Because of their past experiences in their ancestral homes, especially in Notsi (Benin Republic) under the tyrannical ruler, King Agokoli, the Ewes are conscious of social and political justice and the need to punish those who repeatedly violate the laws of society. At the Fifth Landing Stage, notorious criminals, those who in the eyes of the elders are beyond reform, are buried alive in the sand and abandoned to die. This form of justice extends to all including the ruler.

Besides proverbs, Fiawoo utilizes other elements of the rich Ewe tradition. The dramatic action of this play is developed amidst a background of Ewe customary practices. Fiawoo introduces song, drumming and dance to commemorate the actions of his characters. For instance, Fudzikomele and Dzikunya celebrate their liberation from slavery with a special dance for warriors. Also, the song, "Miede za miegbo za" (82), meaning we went at night aŋd returned by night, signifies that the warriors have completed their mission, which in this case, announces that they have half-buried the felon Agbegbada alive.

It must be noted that these customary practices are not extraneous details nor do they subjugate the impact of dramatic action. Rather they support plot and character development and serve to endow the entire work with an aura of authenticity.

The ethos of the Ewes is manifested in their wisdom, love and bravery; young people are regularly instructed in these virtues. The people are aware of the consequences of violating these common values. Good behavior is praised and knowledge of tradition is appreciated. In Toko Atolia Fiawoo shows the vitality of the Ewe traditional society and dramatises how the society deals with criminals and how it is able to restore social order.

Like the literary works of Casely-Hayford (Ethiopia Unbound) and Sekyi (The Blinkards), Fiawoo's dramatic work is a solid contribution to Ghanaian literature. Toko Atolia is culturally and artistically rich and compares well with any of the dramatic works of Sutherland and Aidoo. This work also represents an important transition from church inspired writing to secular literature. Fiawoo shares the didactic sentiments which dominates the works of later Ghanaian writers like Francis Selormey and Amu Dzoleto. But in a more sophisticated way, beyond the levels attained by the didactic writers of the 1960's, Fiawoo does not allow the morally edifying atmosphere to stifle the individual voices of his characters or to influence the dramatic action. Overt moral lessons do not permeate this play. Instead, the characters of Toko Atolia find their own voices and undertake their own actions.

The thematic thrust of Fiawoo's play also makes it an important bridge between the past and the present. Besides the subjects of marriage, crime and punishment, Fiawoo deals with the issues of slavery, justice, parental control and the general upbringing of young people - themes that are prevalent in Ghanaian writing.

An Example of Oral Literature: The Dirge

The dirge is an integral part of a complex ceremony to commemorate the dead. This traditional oral literary form has developed through customary observances. In Ghana, generally, funerals are spendid and are organised with much care to fine detail to ensure that the deceased is properly honoured. This is partly so because funerals become the occasion for families to display their wealth. But mostly, it is because of their belief in the existence of an after-life that Ghanaians mark the occasion of the death of a family member by re-affirming their connections with their ancestors. The dead person is considered to be embarking on a journey to another world where he is joining the ancestors. Thus in accordance with tradition, the dirge is sung as a send-off to help in smoothing the transition between life and after-life.

The mourning of the dead is an elaborate process, the details of which vary from tradition to tradition. But in general there is pre-burial (wake-keeping) to be followed by burial (internment) and memorial (usually, one week or six or twelve weeks after the internment) and then there is an annual memorial service. Dirges are sang during these occasions and it is expected that each performance will correspond with the circumstance of death, age and status of the deceased. The songs must bear the appropriate symbols, imagery and allusions and must be sung with the proper tone and accompanied with correct movement.

The social context of the dirge gives it distinction from other elegaic forms. The dirge cannot be appreciated simply for its aesthetic significance; its total effect is achieved during funerals. Dirge songs cannot be sung out of context; they must be performed as part of a funeral celebration. This traditional oral literary form is a fitting test case to verify the contention of many contemporary critics of African oral literature that the "social context of creation and performance [is] an important factor in [the] appreciation of oral literature as a living tradition".[42]

The dirge exists within its social context; its form, literary worth and significance as a mourning song are developed within this framework. During funerals, the singing of dirges is combined with the social practices of exhange of greetings with the family of the deceased, funeral donations, the pouring of libation, etc. These ceremonies are necessary to strengthen the bond among the survivors and the links between the living and the dead.

The customary rules about the actual performance of the dirge relate to the singer, the status and age of the deceased as well as the kind of song being sung. According to the eminent Ghanaian scholar, J.H. Nketia who has undertaken an in-depth study of the dirge among the Akan people, those who sing dirges must engage in fasting in reverence of the dead. He also notes that dirges are sung mostly by women, but under the authority of men/elders.

Dirges have structural regularity and formulaic expressions. The singers take great care to maintain the conventions of the songs, to achieve the right tone and voice, and to express the appropriate messages. During his research Nketia observed that the singers made sure that the appropriate version of each dirge song was used.

> Many of the informants spoke in the presence of other people. At some places they were often interested members of the household who would throw in helpful comments, repeat bits slurred over in the pronunciation of the informants, or refresh her memory. At other places, the informants spoke in the presence of the chief or his elders who insisted on being present "to ensure that the women told me [Nketia] the correct thing.[43]

Experienced older females teach younger women the proper ways of singing dirge songs. Invariably these skills are acquired at funerals. There is great pride in being recognised as a good dirge singer and it is not unusual to ridicule a family whose daughter sings poorly. Dirges are sung or chanted amidst a background of sobbing, wailing and drumming. It is also orchestrated with movements of limbs, head or slow pace. There is usually no dancing. Each singer leads and serves as the chorus of her own song.

> It is important to note that the singing of the dirge is usually not an organised performance .... Each singer sings dirges of her choice without regard to what others may be singing or how they may be singing them.

> The individual is left to her own resources and to her knowledge of the material of the dirge and the accompanying conventions of form and performance. (8-9)

It is expected that the individual must select her song from the repertorial material of the tradition. This position is strongly affirmed by many dirge singers whom Nketia met during his research:

> Traditional dirges are regarded as cultural products in a more or less finished state. Those who know them would quarrel with unwarranted deviations or mutilations in quotations of texts or of stock expression. Indeed, during my field work I was often impressed by the consistency with which some stock expressions were quoted and by the eagerness with which errors were corrected. (104)

Nketia further emphasises this position:

> Faced with a funeral, a woman mourner need not rely on her own creativeness in order to sing appropraite dirges: the material and accompanying conventions are provided by tradition and it is for her to draw on them. (110)

It is expected that the song should be appropriate to the circumstances of his death of the deceased, the status of the singer, and as well it should determine the identity of the singer. Nketia states that Akan dirges fall into four classes which he labels types A, B, C, and D depending upon the stature of the deceased. Type A is in four movements consisting of an introduction, subject, close and lamentation. This dirge is in remembrance of a famous ancestor. Type B is made up of a number of short stanzas and also deals with the memory of a worthy forebearer. Type C is a dirge for poor people. Type D, is the most common form of dirge, is sung to express personal loss. It is usually sung at wake-keeping when the body lies in state. To sum up, Types A and B commemorate those who have been dead for some time while Types C and D are performed for the recently deceased.

Another indication of the regular patterns of dirges is the fact that they are centered around a number of common themes and motifs. Most of them are about kinship affiliations and sorrow. The singer mentions the worthy achievements of their ancestors, lists a catalog of their worthy deads, and traces the lineage of the family. On occasion, however, unsavory incidents about the family or ancestors are the subjects for the dirges; these details many people would rather not have revealed. It can be said that the oral history of the people is preserved in dirges.

The themes about the predicaments of the family and its sentiments and personal loss are recurrent in dirges. The dead are frequently asked to carry messages to the ancestors. The deceased is usually identified by his family name or his day-name (Kwame, Kwasi, Kodzo, etc.). Also there are appellations which suggest the nobility or bravery of the deceased. In the example below, "Korane Kotoko, Ohene Aboa Fufuo" (29), Korane Kotoko, the white animal is described as the chief, the Leopard. Another example is as follows: "Bamfo-bamfo-Baafoo" (Bamfo-bamfo, the nobleman); Bamfo is referred to as a member of the the nobility; he is addressed in a fitting way.

Images depicting death are common in dirges: muddy rivers, broken paddles, capsized conoes, orphans, hunger, disease, absence of warmth or fire, darkness, fallen trees, empty or broken cooking pots; etc. Dirges often evoke an atmosphere of sadness or loneliness.

In addition, dirges contain repetition and formulaic expressions. Some of the often used phrases are:

Akan

ogo-mee (fount of satisfaction)

mee-mee (fount of satisfaction)

daasebre (the gracious one)

senkesee (the big cooking pot) (85)

These stock phrases below are also regularly used in dirges:

Akan

Abasateaa (abasayirifie) a adoee wo mu

The slender arm full of benevolence. (35)

This phrase is used to commemorate the death of a benefactor or the head of the household.

Akan

Nana senkesee gye ahohoo

Grandmother, the big cooking pot that entertains. (35)

This is a reference to the generosity of a grandmother who would be missed greatly.

Akan

> Agya ... a ne nsa ye no fa-kye fa-kye ---
> Father ... whose hand is always tempting him
> to give. (35)

Again there is reference to the generousity of the father or the head of the household who is now dead. Yet another example is as follows:

Akan

> Eno nkurumakese a ne yam abaduasa na ommoa --
>
> - Mother, the okro, full of ther seeds of
> many issues and proven. (36)

There is a special reference to the fact that the deceased is a mother of many children.

Dirges about sudden and untimely deaths, especially those of young people use phrases such as:

Akan

> Na wobeton adwadee ben na w'adwadee asa ntem
> yi?
>
> What were your wares that they are sold out
> so quickly? (47)

There is profound pathos as a result of sudden death.

> Owuo anhye me ase na maboa me ho.
>
> Death did give me a warning that I might get
> ready for this. (47)

Desolation and grief incapacitates the mourner:

Akan

> Ahnu mu nni me dua bi na maso mu.

There is no branch above which I could grasp.
(47)

And, she feels alone, dejected and without hope.

Akan

Asuo ayiri me oo, na otwafoo ne hwan?

I am in flooded waters. Who will rescue me?
(47)

These stock phrases are part of the tradition and the singer is expected to use them liberally. As soon as a dirge is heard, those who are familiar with this tradition can determine the age status and lineage of the deceased.

A brief analysis of the dirge below would serve to highlight some of the conventions of this traditional form.

Akan: Fante

Me ne a! Mena a!
Aba Yaa ee!
Wo ara nyim ma yetse.

Me na e! Wo ara nyim ma yetse.
Wo ara nyim de obiara nyi tsir.
Me na e! Me na Ekoroe akye,
Mbofraa yi oo!

Ee ---
Na woana beba na yeahom
Kyere m'egya Adom ara na obaba.
Ee, ayee! ayee! ayee!
Na oye a, na oaye dzen oo.

Yaanom koroe akye oo.
Ekow odzi abe nana ofir awiriwa Amba,

Na mennya beebiara mafa a.
Eme na nana keri nsene
Ma nsene bubu a, Amba Adoma.
Nana Kese Gyaaenyi nye me a:
Yenhu ma yefa oo, yaanom mbra.
Yaanom yeaye mbobor dodo a!

Na oye a, obi reba a wommona hen.
Ee Ekow odzi abe nana nye me. (70)

Mother! Mother!
Aba Yaa
You know our plight!

Mother! you know our plight.
You know that no one has your wisdom.
Mother, you have been away long.
What of the little ones left behind?

Alas!
Who would come and restore our breath,

Unless my father Adom himself comes?
Alas! Alas! Alas!
Quite often it is a struggle for us!

It is a long time since our people left
Amba, descendant of the parrot that eats palm
nuts, hails from the Ancestral chamber.

I cannot find refuge anywhere.
I, Amba Adoma,
It was my grandfather that weighed gold
And the scales broke under its weight.
I am a member of Granssire Kese's household:
We are at a loss where to go:
Let our people come, for we are in deep
distress.
When someone is coming, let them send us
something.
Yes, I am the grandchild of the Parrot that
eats palm nuts. (69-70)

This dirge is listed by Nketia as Type D. Here the singer mourns the death of her mother who is addressed in various ways. There is frequent reference to the absence of maternal attention; there is no mother to guide them. The repetition of "Me na a" shows the profound sense of loss. The singer reminds people of the achievements of the family of the deceased; her grandfather's wealth cannot be measured.

Legend has it that no scale is powerful enough to weigh his gold bullion. The deceased belongs to a lineage whose totem is the parrot.

Other features of the dirge are effectively represented in another dirge which Nketia refers to as Type B.

Akan

Asokore Boampon nana a
Anka yede akoboa regye no taataa ne ne
Gyentia Kunini Kyeame ba.

Esono se a
anka mede resene asommen ne ne
Konkonti ba Fori.

Agya Apau oredi atuo ne ne
Nkwamfo Abredwom ba.
Ee Owuo annye me ase
na maboa me ho.
Ee ena beko, ommae oo,
mene no beko. (62).

Grandchild of Boampon of Asokore clan
that walked in majesty and flying bullets:
Child of a leading Spokesman.
He was an elephant tusk which I was going to use
for carving out a trumpet,
Ofori, child of Konkonti.

Father Apau that overpowers bullets:
Offspring of Nkwamfo Abredwom.
Alas Death gave me no warning
so that I might get ready.
Mother will go: she has not come back yet.
I shall follow her. (63)

In this dirge there is an invocation of the royal lineage of the deceased; she is a descendant of Boampon of Asokore, the daughter of Kontonti and off-spring of Nkwamfo Abredwon. Then the mighty deeds and bravery of this noble family are cited. The imagery of the elephant is used to depict the importance of the family. It is only in the final two lines that the mourner focuses on the deceased and her own sense of loss.

The formulaic expressions, the stock phrases and the regular forms are communal materials which would be familiar to most of the people; they are stored in their collective memory. Each singer draws on these conventions for her mourning song. During performance it is possible to have minor variations, but the main structure, the major conventions of the dirge must be observed. Thus the community is able to appraise the proficiency of each dirge singer.

The dirge is bound by conventions and social practises. It would be limiting to attempt a purely literary analysis of this particular oral literary form. To achieve its full impact, the dirge must be performed in combination with other customary practises which mark the funeral celebrations of a particular traditional area.

Halo (Ewe Song of Abuse): The Poetry of Kofi Awoonor and Kofi Anyidoho

The contemporary Ghanaian poets, Kofi Awoonor and Kofi Anyidoho have achieved recognition on national and international levels. The former has created an oeuvre through successive publications of excellent collections of poetry: *Rediscovery*, *Night of My Blood*, *Ride Me Memory*, *The*

House By the Sea, and most recently, Until The Morning After. Anyidoho's Elegy For The Revolution, A Harvest of our Dreams and Earthchild have won high acclaim and he has been the recipient of a number of awards including The Valco Fund Literary Award, The Fania Kurger Fellowship for Poetry of Social Vision and the B.B.C. "Art and Africa" Poetry Award.

Awoonor and Anyidoho, both Ewes, return to traditional sources for inspiration and aesthetics. Consequently, their poetry bears the ingredients of Ewe dirge, praise song, "halo" and other features of their tradition. In their essays and elsewhere Awoonor and Anyidoho readily acknowledge their reliance on the Ewe indigenous tradition. As a matter of fact their poetry must be seen as a celebration of this culture.

It must be noted, too, that Awoonor and Anyidoho have drawn attention to their tradition by proclaiming its beauty to the world and by addressing major issues from that vantage. These poets have elevated the aesthetics of the Ewe oral tradition to national and international recognition. In his review of Anyidoho's poetry, Kofi Agovi makes the following observations:

> There are those who are anxious to turn Kofi Anyidoho into a sectarian poet because of his strong roots in Ewe culture. While one cannot deny him this privilege of birth, he seems to be sensitive to those salient portions of Ewe culture and tradition which share a common storehouse of values with other ethnic traditions in Ghana. He succeeds in retrieving such values in order to transform them into realms of contemporary relevance for all Ghanaians. He reaches out to modern

> audiences in the village, town and city without an apparent fixation in his own culture .... By dwelling on these significant ideas and sentiments which constitute valuable strands in all the cultural traditions of the various groups in the country, Anyidoho is attempting to do in poetry what African nationalism has been trying to do in the new states of Africa since decolonisation in the fifties.[44]

What Agovi says about Anyidoho also applies to Awoonor. What we find most fascinating and unique about their poetry is their incorporation of the "halo" tradition. Through poetry, expository writing, research and translation, Awoonor and Anyidoho have brought this tradition to the attention of scholars of African literature. They make manifest the energy and full impact that can be achieved through the use of the "halo" conventions of satire, self-mockery, insult and even profanity. I will briefly describe the "halo" tradition, show how Awoonor and Anyidoho use it, and briefly note some of the aesthetic problems of the transposition from orality to writing.

"Halo" originated as a competition between rival songsters or "henowo" for supremacy in singing abusive songs. The "halo" songster or poet, "heno," is militant and considers himself superior to his adversary. In order to overwhelm his opponent he resorts to insults, verbal rebuttals and slander. The "heno" aims at maximizing the effect of the abuse.

The full impact of the "halo" is realised through performance. The heno uses gestures, modulation of voice, and dance forms in synchrony with drum-beat. According to Awoonor, "halo" has been.

> a regular feature of Ewe drumming for a long time. Its essence is its verbal agility, exaggeration, and elaborate use of imagery.[45]

Halo competitions are usually staged in the village public square. The climax of the "halo" repertoire is "hatsatsia" or "recitation" or "song chain". The "halo" poet consciously sets outs to goad his opponent to anger and also to draw admiration from the audience. For its part, the audience is active and responds by dancing. Sometimes the audience applauds or simply laughs. After the competition, the "adversaries" can be seen laughing or joking together.

In his essay, "Kofi Awoonor and the Ewe Traditional Song of Abuse (Halo)," Anyidoho identifies three major types of insult in "halo":

> those dealing with physical appearance, those directed at deviant behaviour and the somewhat special class of "obscenities".[46]

"Halo" serves as a social corrective, a metaphorical moral rod that is applied without hesitation or discrimination to age and status. "Halo" is antithetical to the praise song. The "heno" condemns anti-social behaviour and ridicules people who violate the moral codes of the community.

"Halo" is also a medium through which conflicts are diffused. Rivals, competing for land, fishing rights or lovers, express their anger and frustration by insulting the opposing parties in a "halo". Awoonor maintains,

> This poetry (the halo) tends to dramatize intra-group conflicts and dissipates these in words. Its recitation works at a cummulative level; it indulges in sheer overkill.[47]

Along side with the social purpose of "halo" is the equally important function of entertainment. "Halo" competitions are very popular social events. The comedy and satire are manifestations of the society's tremendous capacity for humor. The effect of the slander is attenuated by the prevailing comic mood. The audience enjoys the fabulous insults.

Komi Ekpa and Amega Dunya, both of Tsiame, near Keta in the Volta region of Ghana, are great "henowo". Awoonor has transcribed and translated the songs of these traditional songsters in Guardians of the Sacred Word. In "It Is In The Hands of Destiny" (56 - 58), Dunyo laments his predicament. He is neither endowed with wealth nor an attractive physical appearance. But this apparent self-pity is indeed a veiled threat to his adversaries not to provoke his anger by attempting to take advantage of his physical limitations.

> I will be mute; let some one abuse me
> then I will tell it to him.
> The whore was forgetful; she walked
> like the wandering duck into my song.
> She thought it was like a matter of opening
> legs.[48]

Dunyo's energy and readiness as he threatens his "enemies", are manifested in his use of striking images and also in the force of imagination. There is an overflowing assertive force in his voice as he indulges in the use of metaphors of promiscuity and sexual innuendos in defiance of all.

> Come and hear the voice of slander.
> You clutch the earth like a leather bag.
> On your stem you stand
> like the porcupine in clothes.
> You run like the bush rope.
> Your back caves in rising like the hillock.
> Beneath your stomach is the hyaena's ravine.
> Your chest is as short as the red monkey
> on the corn barn.
> Will this too insult the poet? (56)

Thus, he announces his readiness intent to "trade" obscenities. The variety of negative images are held together by his dominating voice.

Ekpe's poem "Hm Hm Hm Beware" is also full of threats and obscenities. There is a catalogue of unappealing animal imagery. This poet would not be outdone in the use of foul language by any of his enemies.

> I will place a load on Kodzo's head
> Nugbleza informed me that
> It is the women of Tsiame
> Who goaded Kodzo into my song.
> ...
> Kodzo, winding in the air, his anus-agape
> his face long and curved
> like the lagoon egrets beak.
> ...
> The back of his head tapers off
> as if they'd built a fetish hut
>   on his breathing spot.
> His face wags, a fool with a white ass.

The monkey opened his anus
in display to the owner of the farm. (83-84)

The fictional character, Kodzo, is the antagonist who has provoked the the poet's anger. The attack on Kodzo is generalised, since in Ghanaian tradition the name "Kodzo" is given to males born on a Monday. Ekpe is uninhibited in his relentless use of insults to lash out at his enemies.

Guardians of The Sacred Word is a testimony of the existence of rich oral literature. This book is the work of a poet who himself relies on the "halo" for his written poetry. But the transposition from oral to written mode and the translation from Ewe into English alter the original "halo" songs. The written poems which are in reality copies of the oral songs are structured in particular poetic styles and influenced by suppositions which might have been acquired through the study of other literatures.

The problems of transposing from oral to written mode are minimized when only relevant aspects of the oral tradition are skillfully incorporated into the written form. The interface between oral and written forms are well manifested in the the poetry of Awoonor and Anyidoho. These poets successfully use the elements of the "halo" tradition in their writing. In "Stanislaus the Renegade," Awoonor relies on the techniques of "halo" to depict the despicable nature of Stanislaus, the international thief, social pariah and drug-dealer.

> This is addressed to you, Stanislaus,
> whatever you are.
> Listen you punk, the last time we met you
> were selling faulty guns in Addis
> I heard you panting afterwards in a Cairo
> whorehouse
> But I knew you split with my spring overcoat
> a cashmere job I danced for in a bar at Kabul
> I heard you were peddling fake jewery to
> Pueblo Indians
> and Washington hippies.
> The jail you occupied in Poonaville,
> Tennessee
> Was burnt down after you escaped; they
> could not eradicate the smell.[49]

Awoonor is blunt, abusive and appears pedestrian in "To My Uncle Jonathan,"

> You fucker of sheep and goats
> a pedarast in bloomers
> a whiskered fool with an obscene mouth.[50]

There is energy, obscenity and anger in these lines. This passion envelopes the entire poem. Awoonor's poetic style is fashioned after the "halo" tradition.

In Anyidoho's "Awoyo," Awoyo is condemned for rumor-mongering. The poet resolves to fight back. He digs up Awoyo's family history and mocks her physical appearance. He then issues an invitation to his adversary to engage in the contest of insult and depreciation.

> Awoyo, come back here and
> I will sing to you your shame.
> That night you went talking to
> every stick and every little rope
> swearing you caught Agbenoxevi on top of me
> doing some funny thing behind your smelly
> mother's
> broken fence ....
> You witch daughter with the face of an owl
> Come cross my path again.

> I will spread your shame for you to crawl
> upon.[51]

The poet is contemptuous and disgusted with Awoyo and her cohorts. They are described as "stick[s]" and "little rope[s]." Awoyo's friends are represented as inconsequential inanimate objects rather than as human beings. She herself is associated with witchcraft; she is the daughter of a witch and has "the face of an owl." The owl is often regarded as an evil bird in Ewe tradition.

Anyidoho is not afraid nor reluctant to engage in combat. In "Taflatse," he warns his fictional adversary, Sadzi:

> My song will be the great whirlwind
> that snatches your decent cloth and
> sells your shame to inner thought of men.
> (77)

This is a dramatic announcement of the poetic function of one committed to truth; he threatens to expose vice no matter how ugly and wherever it may be found:

> I'll bind your several shames
> bind them tight with gentle
> chords of my boundless song
> Sell your name in the market-place at noon.
> (77)

This poet describes his own voice as "gentle" which should not be mistaken as being weak or ineffective; his voice is strong, clear, daring and relentless in its condemnation of vice.

Anyidoho expresses disappointment and anger with the church and its leaders whom he believes betray and defraud Ghanaians. Corruption is most prevalent in the church. In "Oath of Destiny" he declares:

> You cover your rotten sores with borrowed
> velvet robes, coat your diseased teeth with
> stolen gold, and walk our corridors with
> the Bible on your tongue, selling the gospel
> for weekly collections of silver. (60)

Their glossy coats and smooth mannerisms cannot conceal the greed and viciousness of the swindlers and false preachers who come from the church but are nothing more than common criminals. Anyidoho's indictment of the church is strong as he highlights the plight of the people and condemns greed. His condemnation of false preachers is expressed in the following lines:

> To
> Whose dog did you give your shame, that
> you dare offer the holy sacrement with
> illicit wine, and bread baked with
> corn swindled from our starving pagan
> peasants?
>
> Your mouth you wash thrice a day, but
> your bowels you never purge, and
> Our air stinks with the stench from your
> guts. (60)

At times, though, Anyidoho feels alone as he experiences loneliness at the "outskirts of life." "The Dance of the Hunchback" strongly registers this despair:

> Mine is the dance of the hunchback
> Along these quiet drains of the town
> I crawl my way with strain and shame
> I leave paved streets to the owners of the
> earth. (83)

The poet's predicament is deepened by the fact that he cares very much about his society.

Nevertheless, Anyidoho is determined to continue with the struggle. In "Our Birth-Cord," he announces:

> Our conscience would not be hurt
> by threats of lunatics
>
> a pinch of salt lost in cabbage stew
> it will be found the tongue will feel it
> out. (63)

The facts about the contradictions in the social-economic order will be exposed and the injustices in society will be challenged.

Anyidoho also writes about western imperialism. In his poem "Rodney" which he dedicates to the late Guyanese activist, Walter Rodney, Anyidoho expresses outrage at western exploitation.

> They claim they own the earth on which we
> shit
> and there are no disposable diapers for the
> droppings of their poor
> so they lick our arse with tongues of flame
> But come fertility time and
> history garbage dumps shall give new birth
> to the hunter's dog to hunt the hunter down
> and give him up to the mystry of the storm.
> (40)

The anger expressed through the use of such a phrase as "tongues of flame" is as flagrant as Armah's indictment of Arab and western predators in Two Thousand Seasons (33). The "garbage dumps" of yesterday and today shall become the launching pad for anti-imperialist struggles.

Anyidoho relies on the Ewe "halo" tradition to deal with national and international issues. He is deeply concerned with injustice in his own country and other parts of the world. The dedication and commitment of this poet are well manifested. He speaks from a platform with which he is most familiar and he uses the ingredients of his indigenous society to expose vice and to challenge his fellow citizens to "do the right thing".

The written form of the "halo" does not fully capture the oral rendition. The literary medium loses the nuances of dance, gestures, music, and spontaneous audience participation --- much of what goes into making "halo," "halo". The written version is not able to capture effectively the drama and tension that result from the face-to-face confrontation of the combatants. However, the fact remains that by incorporating the elements of the "halo" tradition into their poetry Awoonor and Anyidoho have made a major contribution toward revamping and preserving this oral tradition.

Notes

[1] See Ayi Kwei Armah, "Larsony : Fiction as Criticism of Fiction," First World 1.2 (March April 1977): 50-56.

[2] Bruce King, "Varieties of African Literature," The Literary Half-Yearly 19.1 (January 1978): 10.

[3] Ottobah Cugoano, Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffick of the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species 1791 edition, xii. The 1787 edition which is an expanded version is preferred by most recent scholars.

[4] Cugoano, Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species (London, 1787), 6. Further references to this literary work, hereafter referred to as Thoughts will be made parenthetically in my text.

[5] J.E. Casely-Hayford, "The Dialectics of Black Folks and their treatment: An Appeal to the Labor Party," Accra, 1929.

[6] Casely-Hayford, Ethiopia Unbound (London: Frank Cass, 1969), 167. Further reference to this literary work will be made parenthentically in my text.

[7] Quite the contrary, there is a growing awareness among Africans in the diaspora about their connections with the mother continent.

[8] Ayi Kwei Armah, Why Are We So Blest (London: HEB, 1974), 231.

[9] Ngugi wa Thiong'o, "Preface," Writers in Politics (London: HEB, 1981).

[10] Kofi Anyidoho, "Historical Realism and the Visionary Ideal: Ayi Kwei Armah's Two Thousand Seasons," Ufahamu 11.2 (1981/82), 109. Further reference to this article will be made parentethically in my text.

[11] Armah, Two Thousand Seasons (Nairobi: EAPH, 1973), 13. Further reference to this book will be made parenthetically in my text.

[12] Eustace Palmer, "Negritude: A Reading of Recent Novels of Armah, Ngugi and Soyinka," International Fiction Review 8 1-2 (1981): 6.

[13] Kirsten Holst Petersen, "The New Way," World Literature Written in English 334.

[14] Ibid, 335.

[15] Derek Wright, Ayi Kwei Armah's Africa: The Sources of His Fiction (London: Hans Zell, 1988), 234.

[16] Bernth Lindfors, "Armah's Histories," African Literature Today 11 (1980): 90.

[17] Abioseh Porter, "'Beyond' 'Self-Depreciation' and 'Racism:' Versions of African History in Bound to Violence and Two Thousand Seasons," Journal of Black Studies 20.1 (1989): 5-6.

[18] Aristotle, Poetics, trans. W. Hamilton Fyfe (Cambridge, Massachusatts: Harvard University Press, 1960), 35.

[19] Isidore Okpewho, "Myth and Modern Fiction: Armah's Two Thousand Seasons," African Literature Today 13 (1983): 14. Further reference to this article will made parethetically in my text.

[20] Chinua Achebe, Morning Yet, On Creation Day (London: HEB, 1975), 44.

[21] Kofi Awoonor, The Breast of the Earth (New York: Doubleday, 1976), 30.

[22] Dorothy Hammond and Alta Jablow, The Africa That Never Was (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1970), 197.

[23] Thomas Knipp, "Myth, History and The Poetry of Kofi Awoonor," African Literature Today 11 (1980): 40-41.

[24] Okpewho, Myth in Africa (Cambridge: UP, 1983), 264. Further reference to this article will made parethetically in my text.

[25] Knipp, "Myth, History and The Poetry of Kofi Awoonor,"

[26] Ibid.

[27] Wole Soyinka, Myth Literature and the African World (Cambridge: UP, 1979) 106. Further reference to this article will made parethetically in my text.

[28] Armah, Fragments (New York: Collier; London: HEB, 1974), 15-16.

[29] F.R. Leavis, New Bearings in English Poetry (Pelican, 1979), 16.

[30] Ulla Schild, "Words of Deception: Popular Literature in Kenya," The East African Essays on English and Swahili Literature (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1980), 26.

[31] Richard Priebe, "Popular Writing in Ghana: A Sociology and Rhetoric," Research in African Literatures 9.3 (Winter, 1979): 407. Further reference to this article (except otherwise indicated) will be made parenthetically in my text.

[32] Asare Konadu, Come Back Dora (Accra: Anowuo, 1966), iii.

[33] See Priebe, "Popular Writing in Ghana," 413-414.

[34] Harold Scheub, "A Review of African Oral Traditions and Literature," African Studies Review 28. 2-3 (1985): 34. Further reference to this article will be made parenthetically in my text.

[35] Abu Abarry, "The Role of Play Songs in the Moral, Social, and Emotional Development of African Children," Research in African Literatures 20.2 (Summer, 1979): 206-207. The English Translation is by Abarry. Further reference to this article will be made parenthetically in my text.

[36] Efua Sutherland, Playtime in Africa (New York: Atheneum, 1962), 2. Further reference to this book will be made parenthetically in my text.

[37] Sutherland, Vulture! Vulture! and Tahinta (Accra: State Publishing Corporation, 1968), 7. Further reference to this book will be made parenthetically in my text.

[38] Kwasi Fiawoo, Toko Atolia (Accra: Sedco, 1981), viii. The English translation [The Fifth Landing-Stage (London: United Society for Christian Literature, 1943)] by Fiawoo himself is from the 1937 Ewe original version. Further reference to this book and the subsequent English translation will be made in parenthesis in my text.

[39] Awoonor, The Breast of the Earth, 136.

[40] Chinua Achebe, Things Fall Apart (New York: Anchor, Fawcett Crest, 1969), 10.

[41] Webster's Third International Dictionary defines "sass" as talking impudently or disrespectfully to an elder or superior, or simply talking back. This technique is used effectively by early African-American writers, for instance, Harriet Jacobs' Slave Girl where the protagonist, Linda, a slave, uses "sass" as a strategy to escape the torment and sexual aggression of the slave owner, Dr. Flint.

[42] Kofi Anyidoho, "The Haikotu Song and Dance of Wheta: A Communal Celebration of Individual Poetic Talent," Cross Rhythms: Papers in African Folklore 1 (1983): 172.

[43] Kwabena Nketia, Funeral Dirges of the Akan People (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), 2. Except otherwise indicated, the dirges are in Asante. The English translations are by Nketia himself. Further reference to this book including subsequent English translations will be made parenthetically in my text.

[44] Kofi Agovi, Rev. of "A Harvest of Our Dreams and Earthchild by Kofi Anyidoho, Accra: Woeli 1985," Presence Africaine 142.2 (1987): 171.

[45] Awoonor, The Breast of the Earth, 86.

[46] Anyidoho, "Kofi Awoonor and the Ewe Tradition of Song of Abuse, (Halo)," Toward Defining the African Aesthetic, eds., Lemuel Johnson et al. (Washington D.C.: Three Continents Press, 1982), 20.

[47] Awoonor, The Breast of the Earth, 86.

[48] Awoonor, ed., Guardians of the Sacred Word (New York and Lagos: Nok Publishers, 1974), 56. Further reference to this book will be in parenthesis in my text.

[49] Awoonor, "Stanislaus the Renegade," Ride Me Memory (New York: Greenfield Review Press, 1973), 20.

[50] Ibid, 34.

[51] Anyidoho, A Harvest of our Dreams (London: HEB, 1978), 18-19. Further reference to this text will be made parenthetically in my text.

Conclusion

In an early (1931) attempt to produce a bibliography of Ghanaian writing, A.W. Cardinall (A Bibliography of the Gold Coast) noted that he had had to extend the scope of his research "so that a considerable number of references are given to Togoland, Dahomey, Upper Volta and the Ivory Coast".[1] According to him, Ghana

> is only an artificial creation and its political boundaries cut across not only tribal areas and natural features, but pass through cultivated fields and even houses .... One can readily see therefore that an article dealing with the customs of the Ewe tribe living under the French Flag concerns the customs of the same tribe living under the aegis of our own [Ghana]. It is not easy to avoid this overlapping.[2]

These "overlappings" have not disappeared following the independence of Ghana and the other African countries. Instead the social and cultural links across the continent have increased.

Nearly six decades after the publication of Cardinall's book, Richard Priebe (Ghanaian Literatures, 1988) also makes the observation that "good arguments can be advanced for the study of national literature in Africa".[3] But, he adds a corrective: "literary boundaries can never be as neatly drawn as the political ones".[4] The political boundaries of Ghana, like those of other African countries, are artificial constructs that divide homogenous groups. Priebe poses a basic question about what differentiates one African national literature from another and demonstrates the difficulty of answering it.

> What for example, really distinguishes Ghanaian and Nigerian literature? I might hazard some tenuous distinctions. Clearly Kwame Nkrumah's leadership in gaining independence earlier than it was gained in other African countries and the charismatic way he promulgated a Pan-African vision, affected writing in Ghana. The novels of Ayi Kwei Armah and Kofi Awoonor often argue with what Nkrumah did, but in the works of these writers we find a far more pervasive Pan-African outlook than in Nigerian writers. Still, I am not sure we can go very far drawing distinctions of this kind. The question of national literatures, at any rate, is a moot one; the countries exist politically, and thus it has become convenient for scholars to classify and discuss African literatures in terms of national divisions.[5]

Apparently, the underlying cultural affinities across Africa challenge the application of the national literature concept. Also, it appears that in distinguishing Ghanaian literature from those of other African countries, one may be superimposing a political solution over complex cultural issues. How applicable is the national literature concept when political and cultural units do not coincide?

It is unproductive to attempt to study an African national literature on the basis of its distinctiveness. A rewarding approach would be to examine the literary system of a given country and any links that may exist with another literary system. From this perspective it would be possible to study the literatures of one national political unit and to account for connections between the national and other literatures. Or, one can effectively examine a literary phenomenon which recurs in several literatures. Also, from the point of view of a literary historian, one can trace the continuity as well as the different directions of a national literature.

There are sound conceptual and theoretical grounds for my approach. As I have shown throughout this dissertation, a national literature is the total production and reception of literature within a given country. Ghanaian literature is seen as one large system or, in the discourse of Even-Zohar et al., a polysystem comprising several sub-systems, some of which are connected to the literatures of neighbouring countries. For instance, Ewe literature is a major component of Ghanaian literature, but at the same time it is part of the corpus of Ewe literature from Ghana, Togo and the Benin Republic. In this case, Ewe literature in Ghana can be properly classified as a sub-set of both Ghanaian and international Ewe literatures. The fact that it is part of Ghanaian literature does not preclude its inclusion within the general literary system of Eweland. In principle, the sub-system of a national or a major literary system can be validly re-arranged under another. It is needless to state that Ghanaian literature is itself part of African literature and is linked to the literary system of countries like Togo and Nigeria. This position applies to discussions of thematic and structural links between Ghanaian literature and other literatures. For example, the strong protest tradition in Ghanaian literature is not peculiar; this commitment is found in several African and African diasporan literatures.

These multiple connections also occur within the Ghanaian literary system. A good illustration of this phenomenon is the Ewe halo poetry of Awoonor and Anyidoho whereby the oral tradition is harnessed for written poetry. Another example is the poetry of Okai which manifests a combination of oral and written elements. His poetry is not so well suited for mere reading, but is best expressed during performance. Also, the thematic links between the writings of Armah and Awoonor on the one hand, and Mickison and Konadu on the other, can be explained as the response of various Ghanaian writers to similar socio-economic and political conditions.

The application of the national literature concept encourages an examination of the organisation of literature within a country. This methodology is amenable to investigating the social, economic and political conditions behind the growth and development of literature. In this case literature is not considered solely on the basis of the finished product, the text. Instead, it is seen as a process with various stages which eventually leads to the creation and consequent reception of a text. Some of these major steps are the development of writing and publishing, growth and expansion of education, increase in political awareness and support for artists. The study of a literary text in relation to the climate within which it is produced increases our understanding of that literature.

Also, I must reiterate that this study complements previous scholarship on Ghanaian literature. I have attempted to amend the anachronism in some of the literary histories of Ghana which concentrate on the modern phase of this literature, particular contemporary Ghanaian literature in English. From an historical perspective, it is possible to trace the evolution and to account for the dominance of certain types, modes, themes and styles of Ghanaian literature.

In this dissertation, I have described the different voices and artistic expressions which constitute Ghanaian literature. I have provided detailed information on the oral and written literature of Ghana and have indicated some directions for future research. The different species of plant, animal and human life in the literary "forest" of Ghana have been analysed. Each step forward has revealed a fascinating aspect of this forest. I have also examined Ghanaian literature as artistic interpretations of the political, social and cultural experience of the people of Ghana.

I must stress that my research is, by necessity, provisional. For a complete definition of Ghanaian literature on the basis of interconnected systems, it would be necessary to show these links in specific and concrete terms. Such an approach (which is required for a full polysystem analysis) must involve a thorough investigation of such phenomena as censorship, school curricula, print runs, number of printings of various publications, newspaper files, archives of religious institutions, contrasting events and similarities in the literatures of ethnic groups divided by political and language barriers, colonial and post-colonial policies, etc., etc. It would be impossible to accomplish such a task in a dissertation; ideally it should be undertaken by a team of researchers. Hopefully this task will be given attention in the near future.

Notes

[1] A.W. Cardinall, A Bibliography of the Gold Coast (Accra: The Government Printer, 1931), v

[2] Ibid.

[3] Richard Priebe, Ghanaian Literatures (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989), 3.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

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